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# Christian Order

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# Christian Order

EDITED BY  
Paul Crane SJ

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## Conformism and the Young

THE EDITOR

IT was not merely modesty, but intuition, sharpened no doubt by months of reflection at sea, which caused Sir Francis Chichester to recognise in the great welcome London gave him after his voyage round the world, a tribute to something greater than himself; a spirit, latent in his countrymen, to which his single-handed journey bore eloquent witness. "I seem to realise", he said last July to the crowd massed to meet him at the Mansion House, "that the terrific welcome I have received is not merely for me. It is a kind of symbol. This voyage of mine represents an independent effort — a private enterprise of the sort that appeals to the British man. It is not really suitable for his temperament to have a State or someone else to nurse him financially, physically, morally or anything else from the cradle to the grave".

His words are quite true. They represent an invitation not to anarchy, but to the legitimate exercise of freedom — with respect, that is, for the rights of others — which government should seek to promote by every means in its power. Since the war, the trend in Britain has been in the opposite direction. We have been given what Sir Francis Chichester has said so rightly it is not good for us to have; a State that has sought to nurse us financially, physically and morally from the cradle to the grave. In the interests of its paternalistic design, we have been subjected to the steady constriction of individual opportunity without which freedom finds only frustration. At a time when other countries — from Franco's Spain to the Soviet Union and her one-time satellites — are steadily disentangling themselves from the mesh of controls which have bound their people's lives, the citizens of this country are passive

witnesses to a growing degree of government control over their own. As initiative is released bit by bit in Eastern Europe, it is being steadily constricted in contemporary Britain. The process has been continuous since the end of the last war.

The reaction amongst the old and middle-aged has been one of passivity and conformism. They have passed the stage where they feel they can do anything to change a system, which is largely the fruit of their own materialism. Long ago now, they exchanged the opportunity of freedom, with the hardship and risks it admittedly brings, for the promise of security and the supposed delights of an increasingly equalitarian social order. The results have not been too happy, but they have learnt to live with them. There is not much else they can do.

With the young it is different. They are in revolt against a system which they feel their elders have created. They feel the constriction of freedom endemic in a social situation which previous generations have thrust upon them. They do not want it, but they do not see how they can change it. Their reaction is to contract out of it; to escape from it into a way of life, a sub-culture of their own. In what they rightly sense as an increasingly impersonal society, their concentration is on personal relationships. Their aim, dimly seen and selfishly grasped at, is to build a world in which these predominate; in which they feel they can be themselves. The trouble is that the young do not yet know what they themselves really are or should be. For their ignorance in this respect they have to thank, once again, the materialism of their forbears. Until this is cleared away the implications of their longing to be themselves will remain misunderstood. Conduct, in consequence, is bound to remain eccentric in its non-conformity and morals at a discount.

No good whatsoever will come from berating them without reason for refusing their assent to a social and political order which sets dignity at a discount and does violence to the spirit of man. For this, indeed, they deserve our thanks. What they need in themselves is understanding — of the dignity that is theirs as human beings and all it could mean for their lives. For this they will turn in vain to the materialist world around them. It can come only from Christians who sense what lies beneath the striving of the young and know deep in themselves the meaning of Christ for mankind.



Frederick Ozanam lived, like us, in revolutionary times, when great changes in the spirit and structure of society were taking place, and when the Church was faced with the problem of adjustment and renewal. Ordinary Catholics then too were confused and not sure as to the way things would go. Father James G. Murtagh, P.P., M.A., the distinguished Australian priest, writes here of what we can learn from Ozanam.

## Ozanam and Us

JAMES G. MURTAGH

**F**REDERICK OZANAM (1813-1853) came of a devout, well-educated French middle-class family. It was of Jewish origins. His father was a doctor and it was through him and his patients that Frederick first encountered human misery and suffering and realized the binding claims of Christian charity. Ozanam had a brilliant mind and was an omnivorous student. He imbibed all the progressive and republican ideas of the time, and was a young man in a hurry. After passing through a youthful crisis of faith, he dedicated himself to the defence of Catholic truth, when the academic atmosphere in France was rationalistic and anti-clerical, and intellectuals were confidently predicting the imminent demise of the Catholic Church. At the early age of seventeen, Ozanam drew up a master-plan for the intellectual apostolate of his life. At 20 he raised the standard of attack at the anti-clerical Sorbonne. At the same time he also founded with a few fellow students the first Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. He became a professor at the Sorbonne at the age of 27.

But he was not able to carry out his master-plan because all his life he was hindered by ill health, and died of TB at the height of his academic fame at the early age of forty. At the time of his death there were already 2,000 Conferences of the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

### *Where are your Works?*

It is worth telling here why the youthful Ozanam and his companions founded the society. It was not merely to answer

the famous taunt: Where are your works? *It was to fortify their own faith.* Describing the origins of the Society to the Florence Conference a few months before his death, Ozanam said: "At that time we were invaded by a deluge of philosophical and heterodox doctrines and we felt the desire and the need for fortifying our faith. . . But what could we do to show ourselves truly Catholic? What could we do to save that which would be most pleasing in the site of God? Let us then help our neighbour after the example of Jesus Christ and place our faith under the protection of charity". Frederick Ozanam's plan was a defence of the Church in terms of history, to quote his own words, "to demonstrate religion glorified by history". His profound sense of history can help us to understand what is happening in the Church today.

Though he became a Doctor of Laws, Ozanam was a reluctant lawyer and never practised. His consuming interest was social and cultural history. Through his studies he grasped the essential role of the Church in the making of Europe. His broad interpretation of history was substantially the same as that of Hilaire Belloc and Christopher Dawson.

### *Inevitable Tension*

Ozanam had a deep faith and loyalty to the Church, as founded by Christ, as our Mother and our Teacher, as the authoritative guardian of revealed truth, guided by the Holy Spirit. He also understood from his study of history the role of the individual theologian, the inevitable tension between freedom and authority, and the significance of the rise and fall of heresies. Nearly all the heretics have been priests. When, during his own life, a brilliant priest, whom Ozanam admired, clashed with the Church, Ozanam remained loyal to the Church's authority.

### *Official Church and individual Theologian*

Cardinal Newman, Ozanam's great contemporary, analysed the relationship between the official Church and the individual theologian in one of the great books of the nineteenth century, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. It was an historical study written while he was still an Anglican. His researches brought home to Newman the absolute necessity of an infallible teaching authority in religion, and as a result he became a Catholic, the most distinguished and influential convert of the

nineteenth century. He has been called one of the "invisible *periti*" of the Second Vatican Council. Cardinal Newman saw two processes, two phenomena, at work in the history of the Church.

### *The Phenomena*

The Church has from the beginning lived in the midst of the world and has had to face the characteristic social and intellectual movements of each successive age. From the days of the first heretics, the Gnostics, the attitude of the Church has been one of uncompromising resistance to rival theories of life which strove to dictate to her and bend her to their will. To have accepted any of the 'systems' which have arisen and fallen in history would have been for the Church to sacrifice her divine authority and her own individuality. She has to guard the divine revelation committed to her. Any other system which professed to be complete and yet ignored the mysterious truth entrusted to the Church was in the first instance met with weapons of resistance. And secondly all the thought-systems the Church opposed contained elements which were true and good. All heresies contain truth and error; otherwise they would not appeal to the human mind. "The sects," wrote Cardinal Newman, "contained elements of truth amid their errors." From every new system or heresy, the Church ultimately assimilated something (in many cases a great deal), once their aggressive character had been broken by her resistance. "She broke them in pieces," wrote Newman, and then (he adds significantly) "she divided the spoils."

### *Examples*

For instance, when the Gnostics tried to force Christianity to identify itself with a fanciful philosophical system, banishing the Old Testament and the historical groundwork of faith, the Church condemned them, but in due course the Church adopted a lot of the methods and ideas which in aggressive combination formed the Gnostic heresies: for example, the application of the intellect systematically to the truths of faith was adopted into dogmatic theology and even much of the Greek philosophy which the Gnostics used against Christian orthodoxy. And when Abelard tried to base faith purely on human reason and the dialectics of Aristotle without due place for the humility of faith and the sense of mystery apparent in the Fathers of the Church, he was vigorously



opposed by St. Bernard. But in due course Aristotle and his system were adapted and 'baptized' by St. Thomas Aquinas and became a powerful vehicle and instrument of the faith. When Martin Luther virtually banished the Church in mediating between God and man, advocated 'private judgment' and so launched the Reformation, he was condemned by the Church. But his exaggerated pleas were a justifiable protest against real evils and formalism in the Church and led to the Counter-Reformation and its reforms and renewal of the life of the Church. When Father Lammenais, a brilliant French priest who greatly influenced Ozanam's social thought, wanted to commit the Church to unfettered Liberalism, Pope Gregory condemned him and he left the Church. Ozanam, together with Lacordaire and Montalambert, all followers of Lammenais, bowed to the decision of the Church, then reworked and revised much of Lammenais's ideas and became themselves pioneers of Christian Democracy in France.

### *True and False Conservatism*

This double phenomenon in Church history, of initial resistance and subsequent assimilation, may appear at first sight to be a process of mere trimming and temporizing on the part of a reactionary Church. On the contrary, a distinguished English lay theologian, Wilfrid Ward, saw in it what he called "the conservative genius of the Catholic Church". He distinguished between true and false conservatism. True conservatism involves constructive activity as well as resistance to destructive activity. Periodical reform, reconstruction and renewal belong to its very essence. There are two classes of enemies to true conservatism: those who would pull an ancient building down altogether and those who would leave it untouched and unrepaired to crumble into decay. The Catholic Church, with a true and not a false conservatism, has in the past resisted both classes of foes.

### *Secret of "eternal revolution"*

The aggressive movements of the times she has at first opposed. To yield to them would have been to identify herself with partly false, partly one-sided and exaggerated phases of thought and compromise her mission and her authority. But each new movement witnessed to a real advance in human thought, new truth and new error, and to fresh developments of human activity and



progress. It supplied materials for renewal and reconstruction within the Church, although it was unacceptable as a whole. Had the Church been content with false conservatism — the conservatism of mere resistance to innovation — and then remained passive, she would have succumbed inevitably to decay. She alternated instead, not between resistance and passivity, but between resistance and the most active process of adaptation and assimilation. G. K. Chesterton saw this process as one of the “paradoxes of Christianity” and the secret of the “eternal revolution” in the Church and as the “romance of orthodoxy”.

### *The work of Authority and the work of Individuals*

The difference between the two processes is, as Cardinal Newman pointed out, that the first process, of resistance, is the work of authority, of Rome; the second, of assimilation, is the work of individuals — authority only tolerating and not necessarily helping, until new ideas are so far tested that authority can ratify what individual theologians have initiated. The creative theologians are the doctrinal explorers and mountain climbers, and they take corresponding risks. When they venture into new and uncharted terrains, they may get lost or lose their footing on a slippery slope between orthodoxy and heresy. For they do not possess, like the Church, the charism of infallibility. But Holy Mother Church keeps a close watch on her brilliant and daring sons who are blazing new paths into the Christian mystery. Sometimes she has to call them to book for their own safety and for the welfare of the whole Church. For the Church thinks in centuries and makes haste slowly. Some few cannot brook the delay and abandon the household of the faith. There will always be a Luther, a Lammenais, a Renan, a Davis. But great theologians, precisely because they are great, keep the faith, even though they may suffer in silence. And sooner or later, when their original thought and insights have been tested, they come into their own, as happened to not a few at the Second Vatican Council. One of the last entries of Father Teilhard de Chardin in his diary was a quotation from Bernanos: “Every spiritual adventure is a Calvary”.

### *Latest phase of Confrontation*

We are living in the latest phase of the “eternal revolution” in the Church, a revolution that has been going on for the past 150

years or more — the confrontation between the Catholic Church and Liberalism. In the heyday of classical Liberalism in the nineteenth century, the Church resisted with utmost vigour and was of course branded as reactionary, obscurantist, and out of date. But with the passing of the years, when Liberalism began to lose its aggressive momentum, the Church began to assimilate elements of truth that was in it, especially in its social teaching. Perhaps the final coming-to-terms with Liberalism was the Second Vatican Council, when many liberal ideas were assimilated in principle into the doctrines and structures of the Church. In the year 2000, historians will doubtless have assessed the significance of the Council in terms of liberalism, and students, yet unborn, will be reading paperpacks on *The Catholic Church and the Liberal Era*.

### *Man bites Dog*

One of the side-effects of the Vatican Council is that the Catholic Church has become "news". The great concourse of journalists from all parts of the world, the breakdown of the old secrecy system, and the press conferences with *periti* resulted in the greatest news coverage of a religious event in the history of the world. Lord Northcliffe, the father of modern journalism, defined "news" as "anything out of the ordinary". The classical example, of course, is: If a dog bites a man, it's not news; if a man bites a dog, it's news. Now the Council was distinctly something "out of the ordinary" and naturally the stuff of headlines. The Council, however, is long since ended, but the press is still hungry for Catholic "news". Unfortunately, the news agencies are finding it all too often in items and incidents which are certainly out of the ordinary but they are magnified in effect out of all proportion to their importance. If some cleric or layman "bites" the Church, it is sure to be news. The long-term effect tends to denigrate Church authority and to glamourize the usually unbalanced and exaggerated "private judgments" of individuals. This, of course, is distressing, disturbing and confusing to the average Catholic reader. It is well to remember, therefore, that the official Church *normally* does not generate "hard news" in the sense of the sensational, and the occasional provocative statement of individual theologians or lay publicists, which make the headlines, are not the authentic voice of the Church.

### *Ozanam would rejoice in Vatican II*

If Frederick Ozanam were alive today, what would be his attitude to the Second Vatican Council and its aftermath, and what would his message be for us? I have no doubt that Ozanam, with his great faith, his sense of history, and his progressive democratic spirit, would rejoice in the passing of Vatican II because so many of the ideas he stood for have been doctrinally realized, especially on the relationship of Church and State, on the Jews, on poverty, on social justice and the apostolate of charity and, above all, on the status and role of the layman in the Church. But in his strict concern for the purity and orthodoxy of Catholic doctrine he would perhaps be alarmed at recent theological writings on Vatican Council themes. Ozanam died before the development of the greatest heresy of the liberal era. That heresy was not Socialism or Communism, which are strictly speaking not heresies at all, because a heresy is something that arises "within" the Church. It was called "Modernism", a drag-net title to cover a group of liberal attitudes and doctrinal errors which attacked not one dogma, but the very roots of dogmatic theology. It was condemned by Pope St. Pius X in 1907.

### *Two Modernist Propositions*

Two 'modernist' propositions condemned by the Church were: (1) The denial of the validity of the proof of God's existence by reasoning from effect to cause, e.g., from Creation to Creator, from miracle to Revealer. (2) The substitution in the definition of "Faith" of a special religious faculty, sense or sentiment, for the act of intellect, moved by the Will enabled by Grace. There appears to be a recrudescence of 'modernist' errors in the writings of some recent theologians. Indeed Jacques Maritain, Ozanam's great compatriot of the twentieth century, in his latest book, thinks that much of today's philosophical and theological literature represents "a neo-modernist fever alongside which the modernism of the Church in the time of St. Pius X sixty years ago was a simple case of hay-fever". Maritain, a convert to the Catholic Church and a great Thomist philosopher and theologian, was once, I believe, a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. He has been identified with "Catholic Liberalism" for more than a generation and has been regarded as almost the prototype of the authentic layman in the intellectual world. The present Pope



translated his works into Italian and he too (like Newman) has been described as one of the invisible *periti* at the Vatican Council. All Catholics, especially young intellectuals, who read the glossy paperbacks of the *avant garde* theologians should pause and consider Maritain's summing up: "The judgment merited by the works of the innovators who adapt theology either to the Teilhardian sauce or to the sauce of the Phenomenologists is not difficult to determine: these are the products of fatuity enamoured of idols of the day. Even ephemeral as they are, these fine writings threaten to completely disorient the Christian conscience and the life of the faith".

### *Ozanam's Message*

Frederick Ozanam, if he were alive today, would agree, I am sure, with Jacques Maritain, and his own message to us would be: Stand fast in your traditional loyalty to the Church and her teaching authority, live your lives in the authentic Vincentian tradition of humility and prayer, and continue to fortify your faith by your works of charity. Meanwhile, the "eternal revolution" goes on and the "romance of orthodoxy" grows ever more exciting and dangerous.

I will conclude with a famous passage from Chesterton's *Orthodoxy*. "This is the thrilling romance of Orthodoxy. People have fallen into a foolish habit of speaking of orthodoxy as something heavy, humdrum, and safe. There never was anything so perilous or so exciting as orthodoxy. It was sanity: and to be sane is more dramatic than to be mad. It was the equilibrium of a man behind madly rushing horses, seeming to stoop this way and to sway that, yet in every attitude having the grace of statuary and the accuracy of arithmetic. The Church in its early days went fierce and fast with any warhorse; yet it is utterly unhistoric that she merely went mad along one idea, like a vulgar fanaticism. She swerved to left and right, so as exactly to avoid enormous obstacles. She left on one hand the huge bulk of Arianism, buttressed by all the worldly powers to make Christianity too worldly. The next instant she was swerving to avoid an orientalism, which would have made it too unworldly. The orthodox Church never took the tame course or accepted the conventions; the orthodox Church was never respectable. It would have been easy, in the Calvinistic seventeenth century, to fall into the bottomless pit of predestina-

tion. It is easy to be a madman: it is easy to be a heretic. It is always easy to let the age have its head; the difficult thing is to keep one's own. It is always easy to be a modernist; as it is to be a snob. To have fallen into any of those open traps of error and exaggeration which fashion after fashion and sect after sect set along the historic path of Christendom — that would indeed have been simple. It is always simple to fall; there are an infinity of angles at which one falls, only one at which one stands. To have fallen into any one of the fads from Gnosticism to Christian Science would indeed have been obvious and tame. But to have avoided them all has been one whirling adventure; and in my vision the heavenly chariot flies thundering through the ages, the dull heresies sprawling and prostrate, the wild truth reeling and erect."

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## *The Modern Mind*

"In Kafka we have before us the modern mind, seemingly self-sufficient, intelligent, sceptical, ironical, splendidly trained for the great game of pretending that the world it comprehends in sterilized sobriety is the only and ultimate reality there is — yet a mind living in sin with the soul of Abraham. Thus he knows two things at once, and both with equal assurance: that there is no God, and that there *must* be God. It is the perspective of the curse: the intellect dreaming its dream of absolute freedom, and the soul knowing of its terrible bondage. The conviction of damnation is all that is left of faith, standing out like a rock in a landscape the softer soil of which has been eroded by the critical intellect. Kafka once said: 'I ought to welcome eternity, but to find it makes me sad.'" From *The Disinherited Mind*—Erich Heller.

In this article Father Vincent Rochford stresses the novelty of the bishops asking the parish clergy to consult the people on their views as to Friday abstinence. The decision is naturally in line with the decrees of Vatican II, and underlines the fact that the Church consists of the whole people of God. He also points out the difference between regulations and disciplines and the unchanging laws of God.

## No more fish on Friday?

VINCENT ROCHFORD

CATHOLICS have for long refrained from eating meat on Fridays. The whole world knows that they eat fish on Fridays; indeed it has become one of their principal distinguishing marks.

In some countries the local bishops have abolished the law of Friday abstinence, and in England it is under consideration. This appears to be a small matter, yet exciting implications lie behind it. In the first place the manner in which the matter will be decided is quite novel. Traditionally decisions on church discipline would be made by the bishops. No doubt they would hold a discussion around a table, take note of the various attitudes amongst them, and arrive at a decision. In time this would be made known to the faithful by means of a "pastoral letter" from them which would be read at Mass in every church. It would also appear in the weekly Catholic press. Whether the result favoured change or stood by custom, it would be received with loyalty and respect by the ordinary simple Catholic.

But the suggestion is not to be decided in this traditional fashion at all. On the contrary, the bishops have asked parish clergy to consult their people and obtain their views. This is a startling precedent. It is revolutionary. It is quite within the teaching of the Vatican Council. For it will not call for an attitude of mere docility, of obedience to an order imposed from above. It will take time and trouble, but it will represent the



judgment of the whole Catholic community. It will bring home to us in dramatic fashion the Council's reiteration of the half forgotten truth that "the Church" consists not only of her officials, but of the whole People of God. For we learn more easily from a definite concrete act like this than we would from the Council's constitutions themselves, even if they were generally read by people. It represents a great step forward in consultation between the various sections of God's People. It is an advance because it shows respect for human dignity.

### *Understanding the Issues*

The discussion at parish level which must precede any decision will entail a clear understanding of several issues, which may not perhaps be taken for granted at the present time. We shall need to understand that there is a great difference between the immutable laws that God gives us on the one hand, and on the other disciplinary regulations which the Church may see fit to introduce in a certain situation, which indeed she enjoys divine authority in so doing; but which in changed circumstances she may well vary or abolish. Abstinence from meat, the celibacy of the priest, the Easter Duty to receive the eucharist fall into the second category. No plebiscite or opinion-poll on fornication or dishonesty could result in a change in God's ordering of reality. Is this difference generally understood? The reaction in some quarters to changes in the way Mass is celebrated seems to indicate room for improved understanding of this fundamental truth. That in itself would be a great gain.

We shall need a more personal understanding of the purpose of "doing penance". What is the object of refraining from some pleasant action or performing one that is trying to us? We shall need to see that tiny acts of self-denial, motivated by love, are incorporated by baptism and by the Mass into Christ's paschal mystery, and, accepted by the Father as part of *his* offering, acquire a totally new value. God's love puts into our hands an altogether new power which our creaturely condition of itself does not contain. He infuses into our quite trivial actions a dynamic value to serve his purpose. The ascetical sacrifice of the Cistercian monk or Carmelite nun are quite different in degree from our transient little actions, but they are the same in their character, and both contribute to the salvation of men.

## *Responsibility*

Again, if any change be made, it will not be in the direction of abolishing acts of penance. It will simply leave the choice of the particular way of doing penance to each individual. Each will have a personal responsibility for thinking out how best he can, in his concrete circumstances, carry out the common duty of all. This will be not easier, but harder, than a habitual and mechanical obedience to law. Many of us learned about abstinence from our mother; come Friday and it's fish; we seldom connect it with the passion and death of our Saviour. Whereas when one has made one's own choice, it is natural to be conscious of the motive behind this interruption of routine.

Forgoing meat one day in the week is not all that serious. It is probable that many will begin to feel in conscience that if they are going to do anything, it ought to be something more costing. One might feel he must cut down his smoking: surely a far greater sacrifice than to do without meat. It may be objected that in the absence of a compelling law, few will try anything at all. This may be true, but it raises the question how much value is there in a compulsory act of self-denial that would not be undertaken voluntarily? The same applies to Lent; but the loving sincerity of a few is more valuable than a customary obedience. It is not God's way for us to hand over our relationship with him to any other person or body of people, so that it is maintained merely by carrying out a set of instructions. It is a personal relationship, an interpersonal dialogue in which our part is to nurture our faith and practise love.

## *New Mode of Authority*

And indeed a very interesting feature of this experiment lies in the new type of exercising authority which it reveals. The stages of development which humanity has been passing through have compelled the Church to try to regulate every detail of her members' lives. Many of her laws were indeed her answer to the query, "How little can we get away with and still be 'in the state of grace'?" Easter communion, Friday abstinence, Lenten regulations are examples of this process. Yet God himself does not give us many laws. His moral law, written out in ten commandments, could as well have been contained in fewer. The ones he gives, he gives with love. They are warnings, signs saying "Beware:

Danger. Beyond this point lies disaster". We can, if we reflect sufficiently, often come to see the intrinsic wisdom and goodness of his laws. For instance, many of the youth wonder about what is now called pre-marital intercourse. They are hard put to find any wrong in it. Later in life they may come to appreciate that such behaviour shows one that although one may love, one is not loving enough; that just because one really does love, one's love includes reverence and respect. Many of us see this very clearly. It is not always within the compass of a teenager, inexperienced and immature, and maybe not deeply given to reflection on life, to arrive at such a personal conviction. Indeed some persons will never see the point; and it is for such that God in his love offers them his prohibition of fornication in order to assist them in running their lives.

The Church then, in her present development, seems to be turning away from proliferating laws and regulations as she was wont to do. She is rather giving us general principles and expecting us to use our reason and seek for personal applications. Our response to God's sovereign initiative in offering us his friendship and a share in his own life is to be more and more free, subject to less coercion. To that degree it may rise more plainly out of personal love for him. The mode, then, of taking a decision whether or not to continue the traditional Friday abstinence, would appear to be of the greatest importance. It marks a move forward in the direction of respect for the human person, in the putting of first things first, in the emphasis on personal choice and personal motive as against a uniform obedience to one ecclesiastical law. Our personal decision in the matter will also recapture one of the original motives for self-denial: namely, in order to have something to spare for those poorer than myself. "Your fast is the poor man's feast", wrote Leo the Great in the fifth century. Our abstinence each week helped no hungry fellow-being. In coming to a personal attitude, we shall have before our mind that whatever we save by self-denial does not belong to us. If we keep it for ourselves, then we are practising economy: not self-denial. CAFOD, OXFAM and many other causes will benefit. We shall be maturing, making personal decisions of our own. And to that extent the Church will be growing healthier.



Planning is thought of by the Socialist as a cure for the depredations of monopoly capitalism, which he rightly detests. In fact, there is no cure here, for the Socialist case in favour of state enterprise rests on the false assumption that, freed from the spur of competition, men will gain their living in the service of the community rather than at its expense. This is not so. Your new state planner is only yesterday's private monopolist writ large.

## The Socialist Dilemma

### 2: PLANNING AND PRODUCTIVITY

#### THE EDITOR

**B**EHIND the planning idea there lies a mixed parentage. It owes a good deal to bad German philosophy which, in the nineteenth century, defied the rising German nation, identified its interests with those of the German people and, in consequence and far too readily, the economic prosperity of the German people with the economic activity of the German State. Out of this kind of thinking came much of the drive behind the Socialism of Bismarck, to say nothing of that which Herr Hitler made his own. Both had and still have their admirers in this country; and Britain's planners, whether they stand to left or right, owe more, perhaps, than they realize to German Socialism. They owe most, however, to that combination of tidy-mindedness and fuddled, because materialistic, humanitarianism, which furnished the utilitarian philosophy of Jeremy Bentham with its driving force in the field of social reform.

#### Planning for Materialism

There is much that is warm-hearted about the English planner. What he lacks is the patience which, in all truth, serves the Christian too often as an excuse for slowness, but which comes to the latter precisely because his vision of man is framed against a

background of eternity. The Christian knows that man's nature has upon it the touch of God, which gives him dignity and forbids, in consequence, all undue constriction of that opportunity of responsible action which is his birthright. Man has within him a creative urge which causes him to want to make something of himself; he must, in consequence, be allowed to do so and this means that he may not have his life made for him by Local or any other Authority on earth, however good and warm-hearted the intention of those who are so anxious to shape man and his world in their own image. What they lack is the supernatural angle and, in consequence, any clear understanding of the dignity of man. Their reforming desire, in consequence, is to assist him materially, and irrespective of the means chosen: they see social reform, not as a step towards the establishment of a Christian way of life, but merely in terms of the indiscriminate conferring by government of material benefits on the people. And they are most anxious that a sufficiency of such benefits should be conferred as fast as possible because, for them, man's final consumption is here and to be conceived, in consequence and especially, in material terms. Hence their impatience and their haste to achieve the earthly Utopia which, from the very nature of their philosophy, must constitute the sum-total of their desiring. Thus planning stands in its own right as an integral part of the Socialist creed. If competitive capitalism, privately owned and driven by the profit motive has been and is responsible for so much suffering, why not plan the economy centrally and in the interests not of private profit, but of the public good? As a motive behind economic endeavour self-interest must be repudiated not merely because it is unclean but because of the suffering caused by the acquisitive society which it breeds. In place of that society, the Socialists would construct a planned economy presided over by a beneficent and omnipotent State.

### **Monopoly Capitalism**

The argument is understandable. Neither is it met by any denial that capitalism left to itself can work against the true interests of the community. It can and has done that and one way in which it can do so is by using its freedom from government control to combine against the public rather than compete for its favour. Groups of capitalist producers combine to build up positions of

industrial strength from which they proceed to hold the community to ransom. Having used their strength to eliminate all competitors the members of a monopolist group proceed to hold the community to ransom, seeking their gain not *in the service* of the community, but *at its expense*. Instead of being forced by his competitors to satisfy his desire for gain through a policy which seeks to satisfy the public by putting on the market a better product than his rivals, the member of a monopoly group is content to seek his gain by making use of the combined strength of the group to force on the public an inferior product at too high a price. Precisely because they dominate the field, the members of a monopoly grouping are able to satisfy their desire for gain through a policy which concentrates on selling a little for a lot rather than a lot for a little, as would be the case were they forced to compete with each other. Under such circumstances it is clear that private enterprise, though motivated by self-interest, most certainly does not give the public what it wants. It gives it too few of what are often the wrong things at too high a price.

### **State Monopoly**

Moreover, the economy stagnates under monopolistic conditions. It must do. This is so because, from the very nature of his circumstances and policy, the best energies of the monopolist are devoted to holding the position he has carved out for himself. To satisfy his desire for gain, he is no longer forced, as he would be by competition, to seek new ways of serving the community by giving it the goods it wants at prices satisfactory to itself. Precisely because his position is unchallenged, the monopolist can sit back and hold the community to ransom, giving it the goods he chooses on his terms. The monopolist lives by extortion. The Socialist may be naïve in his denunciation of the profit motive as wrong. It is clear, however, that, unless it is controlled, the acquisitive society which lives by that motive, will build a monopolistic order contrary to the best interests of the community. I agree entirely with this; the Socialist is quite right in this respect. The question, in other words, is not whether self-interest should be controlled. It is, rather, how this can be done in the best interests of the community. And where the naïvete of Socialism becomes once more apparent is not in its denunciation of the evils of monopoly capitalism, but in its assumption that the only way to



cure those evils is for the State to take charge of a country's economic life. According to the Socialist, State monopoly provides the only cure for the evils of private monopoly. On the face of it, this position is a peculiar one to maintain.

### The Fallacy

Our argument now is that if, in an endeavour to be done with the abuses of monopoly capitalism, you place the State in charge of a country's economic life, there is no guarantee whatsoever that the situation will be improved; no guarantee, that is, that the public will be given the goods it wants at the price it wants, or that the economy will grow, in the sense that it will become steadily better able to do this. There are still those who think that the substitution of State monopoly for private monopoly—for that is what happens, in fact, when the State is put in charge of a country's economy—will result automatically in a situation free from the evils of the latter. Such thinking rests on the assumption that those engaged on State enterprise will work as well as those working under private enterprise and subject, at the same time, to the spur of competition. But we have just seen that the private monopolist will not do this. What reason have we, therefore, for thinking that the State monopolist will act in a different fashion? In a word, our contention against State planning is exactly the same as that which we have brought against private planning in its monopolistic form. Under either system, precisely because of the absence of competition, the public is denied the goods it wants, in the quantity it wants and at the price it wants: under State, no more than under private monopoly, is there any reason why a country's economy should be able to provide the public with this type of elementary and essential service? Those who think that there is, would seem to endow public service, as an industrial incentive, with an efficacy equal to that possessed by private gain. We have seen in our discussion of equalitarianism<sup>1</sup> that this is not so. Here we would re-emphasize this all-important point. Under a State-controlled economy, the spirit of public service will not draw from men that degree of industrial and economic effort of which the prospect of private gain competitively earned alone can make them capable. The onus of proof is on those who think

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<sup>1</sup> See "the Socialist Dilemma", *Christian Order*, August, 1967.

otherwise. Meanwhile, the basic argument against the State-controlled economy remains absolutely valid. It is that State monopoly suffers from all the disadvantages which Socialists rightly attribute to private monopoly and which they persist in imagining, so wrongly, that State monopoly will cure. It follows at once that public enterprise provides no real remedy for the evils of the acquisitive society.

### **What of Soviet Achievements ?**

At this point, the reader may be inclined to think of Soviet Russia with what is thought of as the fantastic economic growth which has been achieved in that country since the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. How can this be squared with what has just been said concerning the relative stagnation of a country's economic life that occurs under State enterprise ? The answer is simple. It consists in indicating the price paid by the Russian people to achieve that growth not only in terms of cruelty, suffering and economic waste, but also in those of unsatisfied consumer demand. No one denies that a ruthless dictator can achieve marvels in the way of capitalization and technical improvement. What one does deny is that such a process achieved irrespective of cost and in defiance of consumer demand, can be classified as a step along the road represented by growth in economic well-being. For the latter implies that the first care of a country's economy should be to give the citizen the goods he wants at prices he is prepared to pay. This is a very different thing from mere technical achievement, which is not necessarily to be identified with economic progress at all. The latter, indeed, implies the former, but the former can stand, like the Moscow underground or Pharaoh's pyramids, as unrelated in any way to economic well-being; memorials, only, to a tyrant's brutal pride.

### **Democratic Planning**

Implicit throughout the whole of this brief study has been a refusal to accept the theory that the gentleman in Whitehall knows better than the community what is best for it. We have made that refusal because acceptance of such a theory is out of accord with the claims of human dignity and opens the gate to the type of planning, which can come to a head only in the barren achievements of a totalitarian technocracy. Consequently our assumption

has been that free men can and will have none of such nonsense. Therefore, the only kind of planning which we have been and are prepared to consider in this essay is that which thinks of the planner as the servant of the community and insists that he must respect and serve its tastes by producing the things the citizen wants at a cost that grows less through time. Precisely because this cannot be done, we have rejected the argument in favour of what is usually called democratic planning. No matter how innocuous such an arrangement sounds, investigation shows that the argument in favour of it stubs its toe on the rock of human nature in much the same way as the arguments used by those who would impose an equalitarian order on society. Against the equalitarians we argued that, if men were to work at all, they needed to be motivated by the spirit of private gain. Against the democratic planners we have argued, as also against the private monopolists, that if men are to work well—in the service of the community and not at its expense—they must be submitted to the spur of competition. To put service of the community before the citizen as a normal economic motive is to attribute to him a degree of perfection which he simply does not possess and to expect him, in consequence, to accept that which is morally and psychologically impossible as the driving force behind his daily economic endeavour. The end of such a proceeding can only be disaster. It is not cynicism, but true humility — and ability to see man as he really is — that bids us recognise it as such.

### **Planning gets into a Groove**

The general argument against democratic planning is reinforced if we look at the process which it represents from the angle of personal taste. If the tastes of every citizen were the same and remained so, it is conceivable that the planned economy might turn into a smooth-running machine, though it would not be a growing economy in the sense already described. If tastes became and remained alike, planned production would be a matter of routine and this, no doubt, would suit a Civil Service mentality which thrives on routine. Here, we have one explanation of the tendency, always shown by the planner, to turn planning into a matter of routine by trying to decide himself what is to be produced, controlling the prices of the goods he produces and rationing them out to the public. A population of robots with standardized tastes is very

naturally his idea of paradise. He never attains it, but his striving can be seen as something directed always along the way of its creation; and that, incidentally, is one of the reasons why so many planners are equalitarians: for one of the effects of an equalitarian policy persistently applied is to cast a community into a certain economic groove through the elimination of that so-called "luxury" demand, which no planner cares to satisfy, not necessarily for reasons of class, but because it is out of the way and, in consequence, difficult to meet smoothly and with speed. This, apart from the fact that it is as much as the political life of the average "democratic" planner is worth to make "democratic" planning, which is conceived of as the agent of "the people", the servant of upper-class "extravagance".<sup>2</sup>

The inclination of the planner, then, is always set in the direction of eliminating that diversity of popular taste which he regards as the enemy of bureaucratic routine. This places him, subconsciously anyway, against change and in opposition to economic growth. It confronts him, at every stage and point of the planning process in a free society, with the choice of either adapting himself to communal taste or else controlling it so as to turn planning into the routine operation which, subconsciously anyway, is his heart's desire. If the latter, then economic growth is dealt a death blow and any pretence that the plan is democratic will have to be abandoned. If the former, the plan is necessarily destroyed; for it can only succeed to the extent that it is seen through to completion and how can this be done if it has constantly to be changed to suit consumer taste?

In the event, the planning politician in a democracy is forced to strike an unhappy mean between attempting to persuade consumer taste to adapt itself to the routine of his plan and adapting

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2 It should be noticed that, as a matter of historic fact, the luxury demand of former days, which was based on an unequalitarian order and a freely competitive market, has to its credit the introduction into the civilized world of many goods which are now staples of popular diet and demand. In this country, for example, tea and newspapers were once luxury products. Now they are in constant popular demand. Had there been no inequality of income and no competitive economy, it is reasonably sure that they would never have found their way to this country to become what they are now, two staple articles in the diet of all classes, including the poorest. This is, perhaps, as good an argument as any to show how essential are inequality and competition to the stimulation of economic growth and the raising, in consequence, of a country's standard of living. The alternative is to assume that a country's planners, out of love of the community, are going to provide its members with new-found luxuries. Is anyone, in his or her senses and beyond the undergraduate stage, prepared to hold this opinion?



his plan to a constantly changing consumer taste. The result must be an unfortunate compromise which hampers economic growth, whilst leaving consumer taste poorly satisfied. Thus the end result of democratic planning is to give the economy and the consumer pretty well the worst of both worlds. And the dilemma which always remains to confront the politician is that of returning to the open society where the consumer's wish will predominate or advancing on into a totalitarian order where it will be made subservient to the demands of a State technocracy.

### **Another Illusion of State Monopolists**

Despite this argument against democratic planning which seems to us ultimate and conclusive, there are still those who wish to stick to it at all costs not merely because, as an ideal, it is ingrained in their thinking, but because, with more emotion than reason, they see planning as the only cure for that "chaos of competition", which, in their view, deprives the poor of a living. Because they see the competitive order as responsible for the maldistribution of incomes within a community, they imagine that the opposite of a competitive economy, viz., one that is centrally planned, will effect within a community an equitable distribution of income.

### **Redistributive Taxation**

But why should it do so? Planning, we have just seen, works against the economic well-being of the community because it impedes economic growth; and this, irrespective of the distribution of income. If income is inequitably distributed, the way to put that right is not for the State to take charge of a country's productive apparatus in an endeavour to turn out what government thinks a country's "submerged tenth" needs to have. The price paid for that is a totalitarian order and the stifling of economic growth. The right way is for government to use redistributive taxation, in equitable fashion, to give the submerged tenth an increase of income and, on the basis of the increase, to let them make their needs felt on an open and truly competitive market. That way the poorest are served at once and efficiently so that their economic well-being is cared for without detriment to economic growth. This is a much simpler process than trying to plan a country's economy in the interests of the poor for, apart from the inevitable cost and dislocation of such a process, its achievement, if brought about, is bound

eventually to be at the cost of economic growth and so of general economic well-being. Under such circumstances, the poor will suffer along with the rest.

### Summing-Up

Socialism, then, fails by the criterion that would make economic well-being and economic growth the first charge on a country's economy. Its policy of equalitarianism and planning confronts it always in the end with the dilemma of a return to the open society or an advance into a totalitarian straight-jacket. The vast bulk of its adherents in Britain shrink rightly from the latter course, whilst remaining unable to adopt the former, which would spell for each one of them a refutation of their ideological past. Consequently, they dither and the dithering serves only to increase the confusion inherent in a policy which, of its very nature, is incapable of achieving the goal it is designed to fulfil. That, really, is the present tragedy of British Socialism: it has identified the realization of its dream of material prosperity with the establishment **now** of a policy whose active pursuit must make any such realization ultimately impossible. For the Socialist in Britain today, ends have been identified with means to the point where the latter are now pursued in their own right, almost irrespective, one might say, of their ability to achieve what it was once thought they were capable of achieving. Equalitarianism and planning are sought not because they will promote social well-being and economic growth, but because it has become an article of faith in the Labour Movement that they should be held and pursued. All of which only goes to show, of course, that the main trouble with the British Labour Movement is its conservatism, which attaches it still to a policy whose roots lie deep in its history; but whose employment at the moment is bound to prove self-defeating.

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The racial riots in America must cause anguish and heart-searching to all responsible people. Here, in the space available, the causes of these riots are briefly examined; and the possibility of their extension to this side of the Atlantic is explored.

## Race Riots

### *Could they happen Here?*

E. L. WAY

ONE would have to know what the causes were underlying the race riots in America before answering the question. And we can go into these later. First let us review, briefly, the calendar of violence in America up until the time of writing. In April and May four cities witnessed racial disorders: Louisville, Kentucky, Nashville, Tennessee, San Francisco and New York. There were riots in which home-made bombs, stones and bottles, tear gas and fire-arms were used. In June seven cities were affected: Boston, Buffalo, Atlanta, Dayton, Tampa Florida, Cincinnati and Niagara Falls. By the end of July the figure had gone up to 13. (Thirteen cities in one month.) In Newark, in July, 26 people were killed, and the damage was estimated at over £16½ million. In Detroit the number of deaths rose to 37, and the damage was estimated at £150 million. In the first two days of August there were riots in Washington, Portland and Milwaukee. A fire raged within a mile of the White House. It is clear that America has a deadly serious problem on its hands. And the slogan that haunts the memory, as one watches the television news almost nightly, is the terrifying "Burn down America".

#### *Causes*

One fact has to be constantly remembered: for 250 years American society was supported by *slavery*. The slaves were freed but the policy of Reconstruction was abandoned after the civil war. And not much has been done since that time to lessen the overwhelming pressures of slave institutions on Negro citizens. The

enormous material progress of America has left untouched all but a small minority of Negroes. And with the growing cost of the war in Vietnam even the most elementary palliatives have been abandoned. The growth of President Johnson's "Great Society" has been indefinitely postponed. And the Negro sweltering in a heat-wave in the slums in Watts, Detroit, and Washington is most aware of this shattering fact. The shops are bursting with goods he will never be able to buy, while his kinsfolk, it is alleged, are dying in disproportionate numbers in the war against the communists.

### *Selective Service*

The Negroes constitute 11 per cent of the American people. Yet, it is said, that 25 per cent of the front-line casualties in Vietnam are Negroes. I doubt very much if this is based on anything so intelligent as a deliberate policy. Rather it is surely based on the logic of a selective educational system. Congress rejected President Johnson's request that selection for military service should be conducted more equitably. Congress in fact increased the chances that middle-class white youngsters will not have to serve in the front line by strengthening the clauses which allow exemption of college undergraduates. The rest of the terrible consequences follow inevitably. Naturally the Negro thinks that not only will he have to wait indefinitely for the Promised Land in America, but also that the time of waiting may be quickly cut short by a bullet in the head in Vietnam. And this does not at all bring into question the moral right or duty of America to stem the evil tide of communism in South East Asia. But it does raise the question of whether that mighty effort should involve a disproportionate loss of life to the Negro youth of America. The Negroes are in no doubt as to the answer.

### *Organised Agitation*

Studying the speech of Stokely Carmichael, the advocate of Black Power, to the Latin American solidarity conference in Havana, (Aug. 2nd.), one can see another important cause of the racial disturbances in America. The man is a living torch of hatred, and preaches openly the gospel of the gun. He should be silenced. "Hatred," he said, "is an element of the struggle, transforming him (man) into an effective, violent, selective and



cold-blooded killing machine. . . . The next Vietnam will be on this continent, perhaps in Bolivia, Guatemala, Brazil, or the Dominican Republic. We must join those who are for armed struggle throughout the world. Those who support peaceful coexistence are for maintaining the status quo. . . . As we develop our revolutionary conscience, we must begin to develop urban guerilla warfare . . . we are ready to meet the savagery of the white United States with arms." Speaker after speaker at the Conference preached the gospel of bloodshed. Most of them were communists. This is the ultimate price of injustice; it is always and everywhere horrifying. Most of us, however, in comfortable circumstances continue to ignore it. The first shots of "urban guerilla warfare" have already been fired. The flames of the first fires have leapt in nights of furious hatred. From the diseased root of slavery come forth the fruits of exploitation, poverty, disillusionment and blazing anger.

### *The Situation Here*

Amongst us there are half a million West Indians. There are approximately another half a million Pakistanis and Indians. But whilst the American Negroes represent a fairly cohesive force, the million coloured in our midst do not. Officially it is considered "highly unlikely" that race riots will cross the Atlantic. (At least this is the opinion of David Ennals, joint parliamentary under-secretary at the Home Office, who is responsible for racial affairs. He has recently been in America studying the legislation against discrimination.) It is also obvious what has turned the American Negro into a dangerous force. He has developed a racial memory of oppression because he is a member of a race whose experience has been uniformly bitter. Here our problem does not involve a single race; and it barely began to exist ten years ago. But the next generation in our midst will not be immigrants, they will be home-grown British citizens. It will be absolutely essential here within the next decade to make certain that coloured citizens with reasonable educational ability are not deprived of employment suitable to their potential. The first careless raptures over automation may well turn into screams of hatred in a fiery riot.

### *"Too little, too late"*

Those who have studied the American scene would surely agree

that the anti-discrimination legislation which exists there now was necessary. But it came too late, and was inadequate. For example there was federal legislation covering employment but none to put an end to discrimination in housing. But the recent extension of the race Relations Act passed in Britain did owe something to the legislation passed in America. As it now stands the Act makes it criminal to discriminate against the coloured citizen in the fields of housing, of the granting of credit, and of employment. But most agree that legislation unbacked by public conscience will not curb racial intolerance. Only intelligence and a growth of a sense of brotherhood will achieve that. And we must avoid the ghetto complex. And it is said, and commonly observed, that the coloured population in our large cities flock to certain areas. Whether this is in search of relatives, or friends with a common cultural background, or whether it is due to discrimination by house agents, or a lack of money which makes the buying of a house impossible may perhaps be determined one day soon by an investigation.

### *Stop further Immigration ?*

Many critics of our coloured fellow-citizens accuse them of many offences. For example, they say that they have come here although they know that they are not wanted. That may be the situation now but in the 1950s many employers set up recruiting centres in the West Indies and begged and implored the inhabitants to come. They came to work, as they were requested, in the hospitals and hotels and on the buses and railways. If it was short-sighted to bring in hundreds of thousands of immigrants into a country short of houses, and periodically short of jobs, the blame rests on the employers of labour and the governments of the day. They thought only of their short-term needs. They did not look ahead to the problems they were creating. And one of these problems will surely be the probability of growing unemployment. To our shame we are reducing the trade gap by the deliberate creation of half a million unemployed. As the computer takes over many thousands of workers of all races who are incapable of doing highly skilled work will be competing for an ever dwindling number of unskilled jobs. Is it fair to immigrants, or to those already here, to add to this extremely grave problem by throwing open our gates to thousands more ?

### *The Logic of the Absurd*

There is a logic of the absurd in all really stupid communal action. If a nation is determined to play croquet with live flamingoes for mallets and live hedgehogs for balls the rules will be worked out by some school of solemn blockheads. The more chaotic the results, the more stubbornly will the rules be applied. At the moment our *Alice in Wonderland* croquet is being played with the homeless and the jobless. (And in that category there are no supporters of free enterprise or socialist planning, you may be sure.) And the principle of this flamingo croquet can best be stated in words which were printed in *The Sunday Times*: we must not overlook "the fact that it would hardly be fair to prohibit all coloured immigration from the Commonwealth after many years in which Britain found it highly profitable to encourage colonial peoples to regard their societies as political and economic extensions of British society". On the strength of this flamingo-croquet principle, we must allow a constant stream of West Indians and Pakistanis to come here to enjoy our sunless, homeless unemployment . . . God forbid that we should have race or bread riots here. But God will not annihilate our stupidity. We must use the minds He gave us or face the tragic consequences. One thing is certain: no community sustains injustice without blood and tears. We shall not be the exception.

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### *Human Life Can Be Better*

"One of the great revolutionary forces at work in the world today is the universal prevalence of the idea that human life **can** be better, that hunger and premature death are not inevitable, that mankind is far more master of its fate than, in most societies for thousands of years, anybody had thought possible. The old contentment of habit is over; the cake of custom is broken. Amelioration of the human condition is known to be possible and is taken as a natural right. "The pursuit of happiness" is world-wide and urgent." — *From America in the Modern World*—D. W. Brogan.

## MONTHLY REPORT

**The Americans are branded as aggressors in Vietnam; the tragedy of a war that nobody wants is constantly and with great injustice attributed to them. A study of the rise to power of Ho-chi-minh, the Communist Leader of North Vietnam, shows how wrong America's critics are and how incredibly naïve.**

# The Rise of Ho-Chi-Minh

V. L. BORIN

**N**GUYEN AI-THANT was born the son of a mandarin on May 19th, 1890 in Kin Lieu, in the province of Nghe Au, in Vietnam, which was then a part of French Indo-China. Later, he at the French college in Hué where he became an ardent Vietnamese nationalist. In 1917, at the age of twenty-seven, he travelled to England. He had no money and earned his living as a dish-washer at the Carlton Hotel in London. In 1919, he went, armed with the famous Fourteen Points of President Wilson, to the Peace Conference at Versailles where he pleaded for self-determination for his country. Apart from the French, none of the allied statesmen assembled at Versailles had ever heard of Vietnam; they had no time to listen to one they thought of as a funny little colonial from an unknown country in Asia. However, the French Communists (at that time, left-wing Socialists) had time for him. They showed interest in the young man who spoke not only Vietnamese, but French, Chinese and English. They told him that the Fourteen Points of the American President were no more than a fraud and arranged for him to study at Moscow's recently founded Eastern University.

### First Years as an Activist

The young man studied diligently in Moscow and then went to China in 1924 where he became secretary of the Soviet Commisar Borodin who was adviser to Chiang-Kai-shek. Working within Chiang-Kai-shek's Chinese Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang, he was able to study Lenin's tactics in practice: the young man worked



for the communist cause in disguise. By 1927, Chiang-Kai-shek had learnt all he needed to know about Lenin's tactics: he expelled the Communists from the Kuomintang. Borodin was recalled in disgrace to Moscow: his Vietnamese secretary disappeared. In 1929, he turned up in his native Vietnam: it is said that he arrived in the saffron robe of a Buddhist monk. He changed his name to Ho-Chi-minh and began organising national resistance against the French colonial rulers of his country. Within the national front he built small communist cells and adopted intimidation as a weapon against those who resisted his design. He organised the assassination of those who collaborated with the French. He was hunted by the colonial authorities and made his escape to the British colony of Hong Kong. The French traced him there and asked for his extradition. Money was provided for his defence and a distinguished English lawyer and member of the Labour Party, Sir Stafford Cripps, brought his case before the Privy Council and won it. It is to him that Ho-Chi-minh owes his life.

### **Beginning of the Great Days**

Ho's great days began when the Japanese occupied French Indo-China in 1942. They did not bother to occupy the whole country: they limited their effort to keeping open the routes which led through the country to Malaya. The rest of the country was open to the activity of Ho-Chi-minh. He organised his National Front of Liberation: a master of Leninist tactics, he knew that, during the first stage of the planned communist war of liberation, he would have to appear as a simple liberal patriot of radical tendency. He neither proclaimed his Communism nor called for the expropriation of large estates: what he asked for was lower rents on land held by peasants. He advocated religious freedom and welcomed Catholics into his National Front of Liberation. Amongst his close communist comrades who worked with distinction within the Front was another past student of the French college at Hué. His name was Giap. In Vietnam, as everywhere else, the Communist Party was organised and led by the intellectuals.

### **Expulsion through Alliance**

Whilst he was struggling in Vietnam against the Japanese occupying forces, Ho-Chi-minh came into contact for the first time with the Americans, who supplied him with arms. They described

him to Washington as an "awfully sweet guy". United States foreign policy has suffered since the war from this kind of first-hand information. During this time, Ho made an alliance with the Chinese Nationalists under Chiang-Kai-shek, who occupied Vietnam after the Japanese collapse. He then proceeded to make a further alliance with the French against the Chinese Nationalists who were thus forced out of Vietnam after the war without the firing of a single shot. Ho's next step was to get the French out. For this he needed a communist victory in China. The victory came in 1949, when Mao-Tse-tung came to power in China and Chiang-Kai-shek fled to Formosa. In the words of Ho's close comrade Giap, who had by this time become a general in the army of the National Front of Liberation: "The year 1949 saw the brilliant triumph of the Chinese Revolution and the birth of the People's Republic in China. This great historic event, which altered events in Asia and the world, exerted a considerable influence on the war of liberation of the Vietnamese people. Vietnam was no longer in the grip of enemy encirclement and henceforth geographically linked with the socialist bloc".

General Giap does not mention, of course, the extent to which Mao's victory in China was assisted by the climate of opinion built by western progressives, who were in sympathy with him as an "agrarian reformer" and opposed to the "corrupt" regime of Chiang-Kai-shek. Their moralizing was selective and followed their prejudices. Take this, for example: a correspondent of *Le Monde* alleged at the time that blood plasma given by the United States for use in the hospitals of Nationalist China, was being sold on the black market of Shanghai. Chiang-Kai-shek called for a strict investigation of the affair by the American authorities. This was undertaken. The investigation revealed that the blood plasma found in the markets of Shanghai had been sold by an American manager of war supplies. This report was not published in *Le Monde*.

### **The End of the French**

General Giap was certainly correct in his statement that the communist victory in China exerted a considerable influence on the war of Ho-Chi-minh against the French colonialists. In fact, it exercised a decisive influence, for Mao's victory meant that China became the hinterland for the Vietnamese revolt: or, looked at from

another angle, Vietnam was turned into Communist China's front line for the conquest of Asia. It was, of course, senseless for the French to attempt to hold on to Indo-China after the British walked out from India and the Dutch were forced from Indonesia by the pressure of the Western Powers. Nevertheless, the French made the attempt. Their only hope of military success lay in the successful cutting of Ho-Chi-minh's supply routes to Red China. This they did not do. The end came at Diem Bien Phu. There they surrendered to General Giap after fifty-five days of siege on May 7th, 1954. This was the end of French power in South-East Asia. The former dish-washer at the Carlton Hotel had come at last into his own.

### **Democracy is Murdered in North Vietnam**

In July, 1954 at Geneva, the Great Powers divided Vietnam according to a pattern established on a far larger scale at the Yalta Conference in 1945. By the terms of the Geneva Agreement, the northern part of Vietnam was given over to communist rule under Ho-Chi-minh; the southern portion of the country was established as a non-communist republic under the French puppet emperor, Bao Dai. On October 23rd, 1955, elections were held in South Vietnam in which five million voters took part. The result was the almost total rejection of Bao Dai and the choice of Ngo-Dinh-Diem as President of the Republic of South Vietnam. Diem was the son of a mandarin and came from the same province as Ho-Chi-minh. He was an ardent Catholic: his fellow-religionists became the hard core of Diem's National Revolutionary Party, which was organised by his brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu. By contrast with the South, there were no elections in North Vietnam. What happened there we can learn from a few grim words on page 95 of the English edition of General Giap's book: "We accordingly put forward the slogan to exterminate the reactionary colonialists and traitors". In other words, the first, "democratic" stage of the communist revolution in Vietnam was now over. Now that North Vietnam had been "liberated" the communist rulers of that poor country could get to work. The landed classes and non-communist intelligentsia, the Catholics who had been members of the National Front of Liberation suddenly realised the dreadful reality which they had been simple enough never to see before—the leadership of the Front had always been in the hands of a

communist élite, whose members now came into the open to decide who was a traitor and who was not. All the "traitors" who could ran for dear life to South Vietnam.

The next step in North Vietnam has been described by General Giap in the following words: "Since the restoration of peace, our Party has taken for its guiding principle the building of a powerful people's army that will gradually become a powerful modern army". After the Geneva Agreement in 1954, North Vietnam, a country of peasants, was exhausted by twelve years of revolutionary war. Now, a modern army is expensive. To build one up in North Vietnam, Ho-Chi-minh, "the good father of the people", had to force from the peasants of North Vietnam twice as much in taxation as they paid under French colonial rule. This could not be done without the collectivisation of peasant farms, thus turning the peasants into powerless state serfs who could be the more easily sweated by their communist masters. The North Vietnamese peasantry revolted and, in Ho's own province of Nghe Au, there was an armed uprising. Ho's powerful "people's" army under the command of General Giap exterminated the rebels without mercy: those killed included local Communists. The massacre is mentioned by Bernard Falls in his book *Le Vietminh*. Against it not a single western progressive protested. It occurred in 1956, whilst Krushchev, at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, was busy exposing the crimes of Stalin.

### **Aggression against South Vietnam**

In 1960, at the Congress of the Communist Party in North Vietnam, the decision was taken to "liberate South Vietnam from the Diem dictatorial clique, supported by the United States imperialists". This decision was published in the Communist Press. Action came immediately after this decision. Ho-Chi-minh employed his old tactics of intimidation. Specially trained guerilla terrorists were infiltrated into South Vietnam. A group of them would appear suddenly in a village, arrest a member of the village council loyal to Diem's Government, torture him to death in front of the villagers and tell them that a similar fate awaited anyone who collaborated with the Government of Diem in Saigon. Then Ho's communist terror group would disappear. Within one year, communist terror groups from North Vietnam tortured to death in South Vietnam 1,062 members of village councils, 345 communal



agents, 853 civilian guards, 499 captured South Vietnamese soldiers, 32 teachers, 6 medical officers and one Catholic priest.

On December 15th, 1961, President Diem wrote to President Kennedy: "South Vietnam is not a Great Power and the forces of International Communism now arrayed against us are more than we can meet with the resources at hand. We must have further assistance from the United States if we are to win the war now being waged against us. We can certainly assure mankind that our action is purely defensive. Much as we regret the subjugation of more than half our people in North Vietnam, we have no intention and, indeed, no means to free them". On this same day there arrived in North Vietnam a Chinese Military mission.

(The terms of the Geneva Agreement were meant to be supervised by an International Commission consisting of a Canadian, an Indian and a Polish delegate. The Commission was informed that war material was being transported from China into North Vietnam. It stated its desire to supervise this traffic. Ho's answer was a blunt refusal). In answer to Diem the American President wrote: "The United States, like the Republic of South Vietnam, remains devoted to the cause of peace and our primary purpose is to help your people maintain their independence. If the communist authorities in North Vietnam will stop their campaign to destroy the Republic of Vietnam, the measures we are taking to assist your defence effort will be no longer necessary".

Those inclined to consider Diem's request and Kennedy's reply no more than a diplomatic trick for the confusion of world opinion, should ask themselves one vital question; Has a single South Vietnamese soldier ever invaded the territory of North Vietnam? The answer is, No. It is the North Vietnamese who have invaded the territory of South Vietnam. Those who so arrogantly class the South Vietnamese as "fascists" and their American defenders as "imperialist aggressors" have never asked themselves this question. They still refuse to do so. Thereby they reveal themselves for what they really are; agents, wittingly or unwittingly, of Ho-Chi-minh and his big brother, Mao-Tse-tung.

### **Communist Aggression and Asian Poverty**

The war of "liberation" waged by the North Vietnamese against the South has been going on now for six years. In 1960, South Vietnam was a rice-exporting country. Today, a consider-

able portion of its population lives on food provided by the Americans. Many of the peasants of South Vietnam, unable to endure any longer the savagery of attempted "liberation" by the North, have deserted their land and live now in camps for displaced persons. The economies of both North and South Vietnam have been crippled by the savage war for which Ho-Chi-minh must bear full responsibility. Its cost is running into billions of dollars. On the communist side, we do not know how many dollars of its share of the expenditure have been extracted at the price of savage suffering and privation inflicted by their communist masters on the once free peasants of what are now North Vietnam and Communist China. Were it not for the war, rightly fought for freedom from communist aggression, the millions of dollars spent by the American Government in support of North Vietnam could be turned to the benefit of thousands upon thousands of poor people in Asia. It is the Communists who prevent this. Let us never forget that. They are depriving the poor of Asia of that rise in the standard of living they need so desperately. They and they alone are responsible for their present plight. Let us think for a moment of the Mekong, which flows through a great part of South-East Asia. Along its banks live approximately sixty-eight million people. Were the waters of the Mekong harnessed to their services and those living much further afield, power for industry and controlled irrigation for agriculture would be provided in abundance. The rice harvest alone would be doubled. As a matter of fact, Americans started to work on a plan for the waters of the Mekong as long ago as 1952. At prices then prevailing it would have cost five billion dollars. Had it not been for Ho-Chi-minh's aggressive communist design, those waters might by now have been harnessed to the inestimable benefit of countless poor people in South-East Asia. Who, then, is responsible for their continued suffering? To the unprejudiced there can be only one answer. The name of the criminal is Ho-Chi-minh.

### **Western Progressives and Vietnam's Tragedy**

Possessed by hate, this man speaks of "liberation" whilst he turns his country into a desert, causing his own people to be killed in furtherance of his vain ambition. Fifty years ago he was washing dishes in London's Carlton Hotel. He was not a Communist then, simply a fervent nationalist. What drove him

into the communist camp was the ignorant stupidity of a western liberal world, which never tried to understand him. Out of that stupidity has come the present killing in South Vietnam. Of how many other tragedies can the same story be told? Will western progressives never learn? Must men always suffer at their hands?

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## *No right to Subsistence?*

"Not long ago I asked an old labouring peasant if he thought the distress in the neighbourhood arose from the increase of the working poor, so that there was not enough for them to do. He said: No! that there were not more people in the place than there used to be, and that there were not more than were sufficient to do the necessary labour in harvest-time, in seed-time, and at other periods, and that if they had certain things to do in summer they must be kept alive in winter: "We cannot go to sleep like flies!" They must be *kept alive* in winter. No more than this! Merciful God! Might not these words wound the ears of the wealthy and the powerful more than any cry! Would not one think at least that such a modest claim made on his country by a man who had laboured honestly on its soil all his life would awaken an immediate and passionate response! But it is against such claims as these, or any softening of the heart that might be effected by them, that Malthus has raised his voice in horrified reepudiation: "There is one right which man has generally been thought to possess, which I am confident he neither does nor can possess — a right to subsistence when his labour will not fairly purchase it". Such words, directed wholly at the most humble claimants to life, and often the most deserving, have always cut cruelly into my heart." Hazlitt.

## INDUSTRIAL ANGLE

In this second article Dr. Jackson considers the ways in which we meet the contingencies of sickness, unemployment, retirement, and widowhood. A case is suggested for more reliance on the extension of industrial fringe benefits, and for making provision against loss of earnings through sickness and for retirement a joint responsibility of employers and workers.

# What Kind of Economic System?

## (2) SOCIAL SECURITY

J. M. JACKSON

THE first article in this series appeared last month. It considered in very general terms some of the problems of devising an economic system that permits reasonable economic freedom for individual consumers, workers and businessmen and at the same time ensures that the overall working of the system is conducive to the interests of the community as a whole. In this, and subsequent articles in the series, it will be necessary to look at particular problems in much more detail. This month, we look at social security arrangements.

One of the faults of the completely free market economy is that it may leave many people with an inadequate income. All workers may be paid a just and adequate wage, but there is still the problem of those who cannot work and who have no property from which to draw an income. They are still members of society with a right to be adequately provided for. It is, of course, quite possible for many people to make reasonably satisfactory provision for fairly common contingencies. A man may expect to fall sick from time to time. There is no reason, therefore, why he should not be able to insure against loss of earnings or the cost of medical treatment or both. If he looks forward to retirement, he can save a sufficient

sum during his working years to allow himself a modest degree of comfort in his retirement. And so on.

### *Providing for Contingencies*

It must not be assumed that it will always be easy to make such provision. The individual can make this provision only if adequate facilities exist and the cost of making the provision is not exorbitant. We must, therefore, examine the main contingencies for which provision must be made, and the principal ways in which this provision may be made. Under the National Insurance scheme, the main benefits at present are for the following: sickness, unemployment, retirement and widowhood. In addition, provision must be made for medical care, and it may be necessary to make some kind of provision for families in which there are dependent children.

There are three main ways in which a man may try to provide for himself and his family against these various contingencies. He may try to make provision on his own. It will usually be impossible for him to do this satisfactorily if he relies solely on his own individual efforts. A man may, if his wage is enough, save part of it so that he will have something to fall back on when he is sick and cannot work. He may know that, on average, a working man may expect to be off sick for a fortnight in each year. If this is so, a man could put aside something like 3 or 4 per cent of his weekly earnings and then, when away sick, could enjoy the same standard of living as when in work simply by drawing on his earnings. The trouble is, of course, that this works only so long as the man does not at any time have more than the average period off sick. If he has a year without sickness and continues to save at the same rate, he can afford a month's sickness the next year. It is, however, clear that there is always a danger that a man will have a prolonged illness that exhausts his accumulated savings. This danger can be overcome by a system of insurance. An insurance company can be fairly certain that its clients will, on average, have no more than a certain amount of sickness between them. Some will have less, some more than the average amount. By paying a premium to the company, individuals are able to share the risks and to benefit in a way not open to them by purely individual action. We will, however, regard insurance taken out on the initiative of the individual as individual provision, even though it may involve co-operation,



via the company or other agency, with a large number of others.

In addition to such private provision against various contingencies, considerable provision is now made as part of the contract of employment. A good many workers are now entitled to pensions from their employment as well as their state retirement pensions. They may also be entitled to full or part pay whilst sick, at least for limited periods. Finally, there is state provision, such as is offered by the National Insurance scheme. We need, therefore, to consider the relative merits of the three methods in relation to the different contingencies.

### *Unemployment, Sickness and Retirement*

Let us begin with unemployment. Here the case for a state insurance scheme for unemployment benefit is very strong. The reason for this is that the risk of unemployment is not calculable in the same way that the risk of sickness or widowhood is calculable. Over a period of years, the incidence of sickness is unlikely to change very much. On the other hand, the incidence of unemployment can vary a great deal, and as a direct result of government policy. It is, therefore, very difficult to expect insurance companies to offer cover against unemployment, or for private employers to be in a position to meet the whole cost when unemployment is high. This is not to say that employers and workers should not be required to contribute jointly towards the cost of unemployment benefit, but the scheme must be a state one, in which, in the last resort, the resources of the state are available to meet any exceptional liabilities.

There are strong arguments for making provision against loss of earnings through sickness and for retirement a joint responsibility of employers and workers. After all, most men have no real source of income other than their wages. Their employment should, therefore, give them an income which is sufficient, not only when they are working, but also to meet their needs when out of work. Many workers are already entitled to full pay for a limited period when sick, followed perhaps by a period on reduced pay. (In such cases, National Insurance benefit is usually deducted.) In the past, such sick pay schemes have usually been confined to white collar workers, though they are now spreading to manual workers too. There is really no good reason why the burden of sick pay should not be shifted entirely to the employers. If, as many people hope, the

kind of sick pay scheme now enjoyed by a large minority of workers is extended to all, it seems wasteful that there should be payment from two sources: that is, National Insurance benefit from the state and full pay minus National Insurance benefit from the employer. There would clearly be a saving in administrative costs if sickness benefit claims under National Insurance were greatly reduced.

Some reduction in National Insurance contributions would become possible, except in so far as it were felt desirable to use some of the money saved to increase various benefits. The liability of employers would be a limited one, and very long illnesses and, above all chronic illnesses, would continue to be provided for under the National Insurance scheme. There would, however, be a strong case for increasing the rate of benefit, and this would clearly be possible if contributions were held at their present level, or at least not reduced by the full amount made possible by relieving the National Insurance Fund of the cost of provision against short term illness. Part of the extra cost that would fall on employers is being assumed gradually by them anyway. They could not necessarily afford the whole of the additional cost immediately, unless, perhaps, there was a willingness on the part of trade unions to accept the extension of this kind of fringe benefit in lieu of a normal wage increase.\* The advantage of this would be that the cost of provision for sickness would be brought home to the workers, and they would themselves be playing some responsible part, through their own unions and associations, in making arrangements for their own welfare.

### *More Adequate Pensions*

Pensions, too, are being increasingly provided by schemes operated by employers, and such schemes frequently provide pensions on a far more generous scale than the National Insurance scheme. Some years ago, the Labour Party published a National Superannuation Plan which was much publicised as half pay on retirement, though in fact the scheme provided for a flat rate

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\* In so far as the National Insurance Fund is relieved of the cost of short term sickness benefit, contributions could be reduced. Normally, employers' and workers' contributions move in step (generally upward!). In this case, however, employers' contributions could be reduced to compensate them for the extra burden they were assuming. Any savings to the fund over and above the amount of employers' contributions remitted need not lead to a reduction in workers' contributions but be retained to provide increased benefits for long term sickness.

pension of £3 plus one third of average earnings up to a certain limit. Thus a man whose earnings averaged £9 a week would get a pension of £6 or two-thirds of his normal earnings whilst a man earning £18 a week would get £9 or half normal earnings and one earning £24 a week would get £11 or rather less than half. The only step taken towards relating pensions to earnings has been the Graduated Pension Scheme introduced by a Conservative Government, and this is on a very much less ambitious scale. There seems no immediate sign that the Labour Party is ready to make any fundamental change in social security arrangements, and this means that any provision of more adequate pensions in the immediate future will depend upon the extension of industrial pension schemes rather than government action.

Again, this seems very desirable, though one would hope that pension schemes would not be used to impose improper barriers to the mobility of labour. A pension contribution is part of the just wage to which a worker is entitled, and it should not be used to tie him to a particular employer on penalty of losing his pension if he moves to another job. The situation where a man changing his job loses everything except his own contributions to the pension fund (perhaps with accumulated interest added) is neither just to the worker, nor is it in the national interest. In a period when rapid technical changes are occurring, and when men should be encouraged to move into jobs where new opportunities are opening up, artificial barriers to mobility are to be discouraged. We want, therefore, pension schemes where the fund is not controlled by the employer, and where the worker acquires inalienable rights which he retains, even when he moves to another job. How this is done is immaterial. There have been certain contributions paid into the fund on behalf of the worker, on which some interest may have accumulated if he has been in the pension scheme for some time. Either that money remains there and continues to accumulate interest, and provides a pension for the worker when he comes to retire, or it is transferred to the pension fund associated with his new job and thus supplements the pension he will get from his new job on retirement.

### *Widows*

Provision for widows is best associated with some kind of pension scheme. The provision both under the National Insurance scheme

and under private schemes is often inadequate. The National Insurance scheme arbitrarily limits the payment of pensions to widows who are over 50 when their husbands die, or when they cease to have dependent children. Under private schemes, there may be no provision beyond repayment of the husband's pension contributions. Often there will be relatively adequate provision for the widow of a man who has retired — pensions may sometimes be taken in the form of a joint annuity payable to the widow if her husband dies first—\* but not for the widow of a man who dies before retirement.

Provision for the costs of medical care present difficulties. Schemes do exist in this country for private insurance against such costs, but it can be expensive. Apart from the fact that few people may be anxious to pay substantial insurance premiums when they are already heavily taxed to pay for the National Health Service, there remains the problem of the relatively high charges made under private practice. There is no doubt that the charges in private practice are such as to give doctors concerned a vastly greater income than from similar work done under the National Health Service. Any attempt to place greater reliance on private provision would therefore need to be accompanied by strong measures to ensure that premiums for insurance did not get out of hand because the doctors were charging exorbitant fees. After all, the average G.P. who now gets a miserable £3,000 a year in NHS practice is a lot better off than a good many equally qualified and hard-worked men in other professions.

### *Medical Insurance Schemes*

In countries which have not had anything in the nature of our NHS, the extension of insurance schemes has involved difficulties. One essential principle of private insurance is that the risks must be calculable and independent of the existence of insurance. Demands for medical care do not satisfy this criterion. Where people may have been deterred from seeking medical care because of the cost, the introduction of insurance may well increase the demand quite substantially. Having paid the premium, they may well seek attention where previously they could not afford to do so.

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\* The joint annuity which continues to be payable to the surviving spouse is, of course, less than the simple annuity that would be payable to the man for his lifetime only.

This objection to insurance cannot be validly made, however, where insurance against the costs of private medical care is being introduced as an alternative to a free state service. One could, therefore, in this country consider whether or not a case for private insurance against the costs of a general practitioner service exists. With hospital services, the difficulties are greater. Some kinds of treatment are so very expensive that insurance against the costs may be impracticable. Moreover, there is an inevitable element of monopoly in hospital services except in the very largest urban centres.

Private insurance against the costs of general practitioner care would, of course, meet some of the same objections as are levelled against the NHS. Having paid the premium, there is no more incentive under this kind of scheme to limit one's demands on the doctor than under the present free state service. Hence most of the schemes suggested by the profession, in addition to providing the doctor with a greatly increased income, tend to provide for some kind of direct charge to the patient at the time. Again, it is important to realise that such schemes are all right so long as one does not incur more than the average amount of illness. Even a family with a very good income may suffer hardship if suddenly called upon to pay out of current income a large doctor's bill for a crop of minor illnesses among several members of the family.

In the areas of welfare considered in this article, a case has been suggested for a greater measure of reliance on the extension of industrial fringe benefits, if not of purely individual provision. Nevertheless, there may be a residual role for the state. In medical care, it may need in the long run to continue to play an important role in the hospital service if not general practice. Even here, however the possibilities of some kind of independent public corporation as opposed to direct ministerial control are worth considering. In unemployment insurance, a residual role is bound to remain if only because the level of unemployment depends so much on government policy. In National Insurance, provision for long term sickness ought to be continued, and perhaps there is a case for retaining a minimum state retirement pension. This could provide for the needs of people who for one reason or another remain outside industrial pension schemes. It should, however, be a minimum provision rather than a normal provision: we should not accept the idea that a National Superannuation Plan should virtually replace all other pension schemes.



**How can we justify celibacy in view of the complementary nature of men and women? A married clergy did a good job why then insist on celibacy? In abolishing fasting and abstinence is not the Church becoming lax? Shall we see our relatives in heaven?**

## **Any Questions ?**

**WILLIAM LAWSON, S.J.**

**Man and woman are complementary. How then justify celibacy ?**

We begin the justification, so that we may start our investigation from common ground, by my agreeing with you that celibacy does need justification. It is not self-explanatory, as marriage is, because, unlike marriage, it is not natural. It is a state of life adopted "for the sake of the Kingdom of God"; and it is recommendable because of the Incarnation and the Redemption.

The question is: does celibacy debar those who adopt it from the blessings of complementariness? They are excluded from the rich dedication of marriage and family; and their love of God and of human beings, which is celibacy's essential operation, has to be expressed without the help of the most attractive kind of union. The celibate state could easily fail of its purpose if it were made an excuse for remoteness in mind and heart from those outside an enclosure: but the failure should not be blamed on celibacy, which is "for the sake of the Kingdom", that is, for love of God and man. The very complementariness of man and woman, which is a condition demanding charity, is in honour amongst celibates, who have done at least as much to preserve it as have the married. Because man and woman need one another, the best team of all for the achievement of human goodness is one in which man and woman are equal partners. Such team work is exemplified in good marriages: but there are other examples, in foreign missions, where nuns and priests perform marvels of charity in collaboration, and in the founding of religious orders.. It would be hard to find, in any state of life, better teams than François de Sales and Jeanne Francoise de Chantal, Pierre Fourier and Alix le Clerc.

**In the days before celibacy was the rule for clergy, they did a good job. Why not cancel the rule?**

Why not find out why the Church, in spite of opposition, has continued over the centuries to insist that priests be celibate?

If there were members of the Church under obligation to become priests, there would be good ground for rejecting the further obligation of celibacy. In the teaching of Our Lord and in that of St. Paul, entry into the state of permanent celibacy is by choice, "for the sake of the Kingdom of God". But no-one is obliged to offer himself for ordination. His acceptance of that state is free, and so is his acceptance of the state of celibacy required by the Church.

The reasons the Church has for making celibacy a condition of ordination are to be found in the New Testament. The ideal expression of Christianity must be the most generous kind of love of God and of people, according to Our Lord's teaching that the whole of the law and the prophets is summed up in the two commandments of charity. Those who undertake to work with Christ in the spreading of the Gospel and the ministering of grace to mankind, on the way to the Kingdom of God, should be outstanding examples of charity. The whole meaning of celibacy, as of voluntary, perpetual, virginity, is full dedication to God and to mankind for the accomplishment of Christ's work of salvation. The state of marriage is itself a state of charity, and, precisely because it is so, it includes particular personal relationships and responsibilities which are incompatible with the unrestricted availability for Christ's work and the service of mankind implied in the dedication of Holy Orders. As St. Paul says in effect, a married priest would be divided in his allegiance.

There is no doubt that married priests have, as you say, done "a good job"; and no doubt they could do so again. But the question is: Celibacy being the ideal for priests presented by Christ and by the whole Catholic tradition, ought not the acceptance of the ideal be required of those who freely present themselves for ordination?

**Is not the church becoming lax by abolishing fasting and abstinence?**

Yes—if abolishing is all that she has done! The Church is trying to bring her members to a fuller practice of Christianity.

The eucharistic fast has been made much easier so that frequent Communion may be possible for more of the faithful. Now fasting is limited to one or two days in the year, and Friday abstinence may be altogether abolished. The reason cannot be the Church's encouragement of softness. Various episcopal statements on the subject show the Church's wish for the growth of the *spirit* of penance.

You may have heard the phrase *ex opere operato* used disdainfully. There is a fear that the majority of Catholics may have become passive in their use of the means of grace, thinking that the very offering of the Mass and administration of the sacraments produce their effect without those present making themselves part of sacrifice and sacrament and deliberately opening their minds and hearts to Christ and his life. The fear has some basis in fact. The Mass and the Sacraments do what they signify (*ex opere operato*); but the faithful can make themselves (*ex opere operantis*) more or less receptive of the grace that is available.

It is thought that, in this minor matter of fasting and abstinence, Catholics may consider that the external penance has done all their work for them — they are fish-on-Friday people, mortified by the very practice of the Church. I do not agree that Catholics generally are so insensitive. They do co-operate in the Mass and the sacraments, and they do chasten their spirit when they fast and abstain. But there is always much more to be done; and it is hoped that, when penance is left to private initiative, Catholics will practice the penance of unfailing charity.

**Shall we see our relatives in heaven, if they are there and we also go there?**

Yes. The one theological virtue which survives death is charity; and charity is of the same essential kind as it is in this life — a full dedication to God, and a corresponding dedication to the created members of his family. What is more, we shall recognize our own special members of the family. The transformation they underwent in their attainment of perfection and their enjoyment of the beatific vision was in the line of their personality — their perfection is personal, and being perfect they are the persons we always knew, only more so.

If we arrive in heaven — as, please God, we shall — we shall

carry our whole history with us. Our personality is a living reality which we are trying to build — not just an inert mixture of virtues and vices, attitudes and prejudices. The most formative influence in any life is personal relationships, above all, relationship with the Three Persons in God, and then relationship with people. An expert can read in the rings and other characteristics of a tree a history of sunshine and rain, frosts, droughts and prevailing winds. Even we, in our present ignorance, can find in ourselves and others evidence of personal relationships—affection or neglect, security or instability, lack of discipline or too much of it, surrender to instincts and impulses or an effort to tame them in the service of the person. In heaven our history of personal relationships will be manifest in the person we are; and from contemplation of ourselves we shall need to continue the loving exchange by which we were enabled to present ourselves to God as, with his grace, the architects of our own being, “workmen of whom he needeth not be ashamed”.

**If a priest disobeys the Pope, what kind of sin does he commit?**

We must begin with an examination, in general, of authority and obedience to it. There are two main kinds of authority; that which is exercised over minds and that which governs external behaviour. The governmental sort of authority is essential for order in any society, and so it exists in families, nation states, the Church, and such lesser associations as commercial firms, trade unions and even football teams. It is exercised by parents, ministers of state, the Pope and diocesan bishops, managers, team captains and traffic policemen.

The administrative authority in the Church is exercised over priests to decide the nature and the place of their work. Normally it is diocesan bishops who have the government of the clergy within their own dioceses; but there are general orders given by the Pope to which obedience is due. Universal rules for the administration of the sacraments and for the liturgy in general are of that kind.

Authority over minds is claimed by totalitarian states founded on a supposedly infallible ideology. The powers in such states demand of their subjects that they think approved thoughts and no others.

In democratic states "the party line" is made obligatory on, for example, members of Parliament, and even on members of private associations: but the claim is only the presentation of an alternative—to vote with the leaders or to forfeit the support of the party. The Church's claim to inner assent is based on her commission from Christ to expound revelation with his authority, and it is absolute.

Disobedience to the Pope can be denial of his governing or his teaching authority. The one is an offence against good order, varying in seriousness; the other is of itself gravely serious and could amount to formal heresy.

### **How can I advise a lapsed Christian to return to the Church?**

Don't give advice unless it is asked for. The lapsed are usually in a state of interior argument, wondering if they are following conscience or if their conscience is trustworthy, alternating between misgivings about their abandonment of organized religion and attempts to justify their action and be at peace in their changed state. Advice, unless they have appealed for it and are therefore receptive, provokes them to find reasons for rejecting it; and by proffering counsel unasked you may harden an attitude of rejection which is still uncertain and vincible.

If a lapsed Christian takes the initiative with you, and introduces the subject of his lapse, you should try to find out delicately what his present position and attitude are. Has he lapsed from religion in general and arrived at thinking himself an agnostic or even an atheist? The best you can do then is to induce an openness of mind—a willingness to be enlightened. The possibility that God exists is accepted by many who incline towards atheism, and you may be able to get such a person to admit a darkness in his mind (we all have it) and to be open to a possible illumination. Such an openness is a genuine kind of prayer which cannot fail to be heard.

Someone lapsed from organized religion but still believing in God will, if he is honest, be still saying his prayers. You may be able to urge him to intensify his prayers. But beware of argument. Some of the lapsed (and some practising Catholics too) have the quite false idea that you arrive at faith only by being able to prove



to yourself that all the doctrines of faith are entirely reasonable. They ignore the fact that faith is a personal meeting with God which God alone can bring about. The cure for lost faith is not argument but prayer. Explanation of difficulties, yes: but on a basis of prayer.

### **What should one do to avoid going to Purgatory ?**

That's one way of putting it ! Nobody in his senses thinks of his life as endless; and his thoughts must cross the boundary and speculate about his prospects, which, for a Catholic, include the possibility of purgatory: but the idea of "avoiding" rather than "gaining" seems to lack hope, and the stimulus it gives. When you prepare for an examination, you don't say: "How do I avoid having to sign on for re-examination in English Literature and Sanskrit ? You ask how you can pass in all your subjects. "Succeeding" and "not failing" come to the same in the end; but they are quite different in the beginning, as aims.

Purgatory is a school of perfection, and we go there after failing to reach the required standard in the school of life. It is the fact which various doctrines of re-incarnation are trying to find, as an answer to the problem of human failure to reach its ideal.

The human task is to come fully alive in love of God and love of people. It is only that full liveliness which fits us for the presence of God. Those who attain it before they die are the rare ones who graduate from life's school of charity fully qualified: the rest of us have to go to school again.

The Christian syllabus is so full that only full application will get through it. There are no holidays. All the time, we have to be disciples, learning from Christ in the light and power of the Holy Spirit. The feeling that we shall never make the grade should be no discouragement but a reminder that we must be more and more open to the Holy Spirit who will give us the light and the power to do what God wants us to do.

### **Why should we be afraid of death? We are on earth only temporarily ?**

The sting of death is sin, as St. Paul says. Fear of death arises either from an unrelieved consciousness of sin, or from no sense of sin at all. Anyone whose conscience does not reproach him with failure before God cannot know what life is about and

must therefore be ignorant of the meaning of death. It will appear to him either as the end of all the futilities of his existence, the ultimate "vanity of vanities", or as the entry into a frightening unknown. Awareness of one's sinfulness implies a recognition of responsibility before God, which no one can take lightly who has any idea of God's holiness — that infinite perfection before which we have to appear.

The questioner's purpose is to appeal for a Christian assessment of human nature, which is immortal and which should be considered always in terms of eternity. We are well able to estimate intervals inside our temporal span — we know that our holidays come to an end, that we return from them to go on with making a living. Schooldays and apprenticeships are limited stretches of our time: we do not want them to go on forever. Our life in time is a short spell to be got through happily and profitably but with a growing eagerness to come to the end of it, so that we may move on to our real life. We may have regrets as the end comes nearer, as we regret the termination of an enjoyable stage like school or professional training; but we would not like to stay or to go through that stage again.

Fine ! If we were sinless, that is just the way we could think of life and death. As it is, we need, in order to have a right judgment, to unite ourselves with Christ in his life, death and resurrection.

**Is oecumenism likely to encourage indifferentism, especially in developing countries where full religious knowledge is rare ?**

Oecumenism has its dangers; and the recent Council took notice of them in recommending a great esteem for truth, as well as humility and charity. That regard for truth works in two ways. Firstly it brings home to us the impossibility of building human society unless the mass of people speak honestly, according to their mind. If people lied habitually, there would be no sense in asking questions; and we should all be twisted with suspicion and hatred. Well, not only should we ourselves speak the truth, we should also suppose that all others speak the truth; unless we have good grounds for doubting their veracity; and in hearing a profession of religious belief we should accept it as sincere, made

in good conscience as a statement of truth. All genuine believers are united in their desire to know and their contentment in the possession of some truth.

The second effect of a regard for truth is an acceptance of the obligation to search for it and to make it part of ourselves as we gradually find it. Truth is a hidden treasure that we must look for, and an inexhaustible store of riches to be endlessly examined when we know where it is. We do not *make* truth: we discover it. Our assertions, convictions, beliefs are not true because we state them: They are true only if we state what is. The law courts provide examples of conflicting statements by witnesses about, for example, an accident. The witnesses, we may suppose, are all honest, truthful in that they are saying what they think is the truth, but, some of them, untruthful in that their account of what happened is false.

A Jew and a Christian may be equally truthful in the sense of "honest"; but of the two statements: Christ is the Messiah; Christ is not the Messiah, only one can be true.

**Christianity and Communism are two contrary philosophies.  
Why does not the Church teach both in an elementary way,  
so that even the barely literate can understand the conflict  
between them ?**

The defect in elementary exposition of any serious subject is that they are both inadequate and dangerous. No philosophy can be summed up in a few simple sentences or taught in a few easy lessons. If such a feat is attempted, a pupil would either be dissatisfied, recognizing that justice is not being done, or, worse still, he would think he was sufficiently informed — learned, even, and that is the "little learning" which the poet called "dangerous".

I wonder if you have considered the contradictions within your proposal. The recipients of this crash course in conflicting philosophies include the barely literate. How do you propose to instruct them in the technical language without which the philosophies cannot be expressed? To take only two words: how would you bring your pupils to an intelligent use of "dialectic" and "analogy"? Again, do you propose to present only those parts of communist thinking which are in direct opposition to Christianity —with, of course, the Christian victory assured? That would be

unjust. You surely do not want parrot-work without understanding, the learning of slogans and rules of thumb which can be voiced as a substitute for thinking?

What most Catholics can accept and make their own is not scientific philosophy but what is called a philosophy of life, that is, a set of values inseparable from their personality by which they measure the world around them. By the standards of that philosophy they have already rejected communism on its historical record of persecution of religion and disregard of the human rights of those who oppose the Party.

In any case, what we all need is much less *anti* and much more *pro* — *pro* the Christianity which is Christ.

**Sin can be committed either by desire or by action. Which is the more serious?**

Sorry! I don't follow. It stands to reason, doesn't it, that to desire to commit murder and then to carry the desire into effect by murdering someone is worse than to stop short of doing the desired evil? That can't be the subject of your question. Nor can you be asking if action alone, without desire — without wanting — is less sinful than a will to evil. Such action is not human, and not sin.

Are you asking if what are called intellectual sins are more malicious than those which move quickly from the mind to behaviour? The answer, in general, is Yes. It is by intellect that man is most himself, most human, and most responsible for the direction he gives to his life. It is in his mind that he loves or hates, is selfish or unselfish, proud or humble. That is where his personality is formed and exercised. If in that citadel of himself he cultivates evil, it is at its most concentrated and intense. The leisure of thinking can make evil cold, bitter and relentless. Pride is of that fearful sort.

If reason gets mixed up with passions which belong largely to feelings, then good or evil are openly manifested, perhaps explosively: but what is more clearly manifested may lose some of its deliberateness by coming into the open. A burst of anger or irritation seems sometimes to release tension and leave the culprit placid. Anger of any kind (except the rare "righteous" sort) is not recommended; but better a passionate outburst which clears the

mind than the suppressed anger which the mind broods on and hatches into cold hatred.

For the best answer to your question, remember the beatitude, Blessed are the pure of heart, and read St. Mathew, 15, 10-20.

**Is it better for Catholics to have their own associations than to join non-denominational bodies ?**

There are many fields where only one kind of organization exists to be joined, and it is the kind, most often, which Catholics should join so as to fulfil the obligations of responsible members of society. Parliament, political parties, trade and professional unions, welfare state and local government committees, are all non-denominational, and it is to those that the Catholic should direct himself. The one available for nearly everybody is the trade or professional union, which should be joined *effectively*, with understanding of its organization and with regular attendance at and participation in meetings. If that activity is not possible, at least Catholics should use their vote responsibly.

The fields strictly for Catholics — such as societies connected with worship — are not here in question. What about Catholic societies which seem to compete with non-denominational bodies in various works of charity and in education? There are national unions and Catholic federations for students and teachers, and there are bodies like Oxfam and Catholic missionary societies. Which should one join?

One should first of all be clear about competition. The National Union of Teachers, and the Catholic Teachers' Federation differ in status and purpose: the one is a professional union to keep up professional standards: the other is a private association to preserve Christian ideals in education. The Catholic teacher should belong to both.

Some charitable works are the assumption by Catholics of responsibility for the needy of their own communion — orphans, the sick and the old; and one of their needs is a Catholic home. In those works, Catholics are exclusive. All the more reason, then, for participation wherever possible in the charitable efforts of their fellow-citizens. That sharing can be achieved to a large extent by active membership of trade unions and of the committees that run the welfare state: but it should always be remembered that charity should begin at home and go on living there.



## THE CHURCH AT WORK

Fr. Crane's two earlier articles discussed the challenge of secularism in Africa and the need for a trained lay élite, imbued with Christian principles, to help in shaping the new Africa that is emerging. In this concluding article he explains the work being done to produce the nucleus of such an élite. This series of articles first appeared in *Catena*, the journal of the Catenian Association. They are reproduced here by kind permission of the editor.

# Christian Prospects in Africa

## 3: THE WORK OF CLAVER HOUSE

PAUL CRANE, S.J.

CLAVER HOUSE owes its foundation to an analysis made eight years ago of what seemed to me, at the time, the most pressing need of contemporary Africa. It was similar to that already outlined in the second article of this short series. I was on my first visit to the African continent. I found myself in Tanzania at the end of 1958 in response to an invitation from the bishops of a country I have loved ever since. I was asked on arrival what organization I intended to found. I replied, none. Asked what I then intended to do, I answered: "The problem in Africa, I imagine, is that of the wrong men in the right places. Our task is to train the right men for the right places. It is as simple to explain, and as difficult to execute as that". In other words, the influence of Christian principles—against secularism and in support of dignity—at all levels of the rapidly evolving social, economic and political life of Africa.

This was the immediate need of that continent, I felt sure. The Church would neglect it at her peril. Moreover, to be effective, it had to be exercised mainly in one way; through a lay élite dedicated to the point of highest self-sacrifice in the true interests of their country and, therefore, their Church. In this context of influence, preaching would not do, no more would books, pamphlets and Catholic papers. Catholic organizations would be out of place

here. As part of Catholic Action, they were unfitted to reach into the guts of the contemporary situation, to penetrate society with principle. For this, one required a trained élite of young African laymen; not Catholic Action, but the selfless action of a few dedicated Catholics. In this context, numbers meant nothing. What counted was the quality of the few. All else was ancillary to that.

### *Interest of Trained Elite*

Everything I saw in the course of my first African trip confirmed the analysis made at its outset. Everything I have seen in subsequent trips not only to English-speaking, but to Malta, Pakistan, India, Guyana and the West Indies has strengthened this confirmation still further. I am in touch now with developing countries in many parts of the world. What my correspondents write confirms even further, if that be possible, the witness of my own eyes.

The immediate need everywhere in the developing world is for the exercise of influence through the dedicated efforts of young Christian laymen pledged to bring principles into public life. Their object in so doing is neither the static preservation of a status quo Church nor, at the other extreme, to subvert legitimate authority. It is, rather, to serve the best interests of their countries through a constant endeavour to uphold the dignity of their fellow citizens and, therefore, their rights, at those levels of social and political life in which their working days are spent. Their work is negative in that they have to counteract the constant secularist tendency — present everywhere today — to constrict human rights, to build society without regard for dignity. It is basically positive in that it concentrates on the enlargement, in practical and concrete terms, of those opportunities demanded by the dignity of the individual citizen. There can be no let-up in the striving of members of this élite. Their work can never cease. They know far better than most that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance. They are determined that it shall not die. These men are true patriots because they are Christians, their governments' good servants because God's first. The real traitors are those who accuse them of subversion because of the work they do.

### *Claver House Aims*

The reader must forgive me. My pen has raced into a description of all I hope for from my Claver House men. The house was

founded in the late autumn of 1960. The first Mass was said there on November 1 of that year, the Feast of All Saints. We began with a dozen men, drawn mainly from Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. Each year since, there has been a regular intake of approximately thirty. I want no more. Quality alone counts in this work and you can only know thirty in a year. In this kind of training, personal relationships count above all. Institutions are out. Claver House is a home. Ask my past students about it anywhere in Africa: they will tell you they love the place. They will mean what they say.

The programme of studies follows lines the reader probably would expect. Students are drawn from every range of African life. They are selected on a basis, not of academic record but of character and leadership potential. They know soon after they begin the course that education without dedication has brought little good to Africa today or anywhere else for that matter. True leadership requires both, with the accent on dedication. Motive, therefore, has to be inculcated at Claver House. For the Catholic, this can only be through a meaningful recognition of the significance of life in Christ: what it means to be one of the People of God. A long course is devoted to this; above all, we try to live at Claver House as a Christian community should. There are no rules. Charity (which I would rather call loving kindness towards each other) we try to make the basis of all we do. We are adults, brothers, sharing a home and a way of life that is ours together. It has to be like this. Visitors remark on it; "What a wonderful spirit you have here". I have heard that so often and I am thankful.

### *Making Mature Christians*

Dedication has to be supported with education if it is to be really effective. Generosity must be informed to secure results. So there are courses in social ethics and economics, the labour movement and trade unionism, political theory and comparative government, current affairs and ethical values — all shaped round the concept of human dignity, dedicated to its manifold support. The range is designed, not to stuff a man indiscriminately with knowledge, but to build up in him a reasoned attitude to public life, an intelligence poised to cause him to react instinctively to events in a manner worthy of a mature Christian, measuring them always against a background of principle.

Finally, there must be technique. The knowledge of the dedicated is not for themselves, but for others. What they learn must be given concrete expression in the service of their fellow citizens. So, they are taught English expression and public speaking to enable them to get it across, chairmanship and procedure at meetings, book-keeping and the mysteries of trade-union constitutions, credit-union philosophy and administration, the essentials of community and credit-union development, techniques of group action and the strategy of an effective approach to varied situations. They learn how to think on their feet. Above all, they must have courage and honesty and a love of the truth sufficient to persevere when it is against all the inclinations of human nature to do so.

How successful have we been at Claver House? I have had 22 years in the field of what some call social action, 15 in this country and the last 7 in the developing world. I am too old now to fool myself. I have seen the work of past students at first hand. I am constantly on the receiving end of their news. I receive unsolicited reports from others about them that fill me with pride in my men. My estimate, after seven years work at Claver House, is that we score well and truly with at least eight out of every ten who come to us. Eighty per cent. do first-class work when they get back to their own countries after the 9 months course.

Space forbids a long list of past students and their work, but here are some examples: the Minister of Justice in Lesotho and the leading trade unionist in that country, two Members of Parliament in Tanzania, the first African manager of the Kenya Meat Commission factory in Nairobi (he is also first chairman of the Kenya National Council of Social Service), the officer in charge of adult education in its relation to community development for the whole of Tanzania, managers of successful co-operatives in Uganda, the officer in charge of urban community development training in Zambia, a town councillor in Dar-es-Salaam, the founder of first-class credit unions in Nigeria and Uganda, a priest whose name is a bye-word in Northern Ghana, the leader of the Catholic Association in the diocese of Umtali, Rhodesia, the first lay educational secretaries in two dioceses of East Africa, an Assistant Town Manager in the copperbelt of Zambia. These are a few of my students and their jobs, jotted down at random. I know of very many others and their work is first-class.

## *Future Plans*

Encouragement has been such that the work has broadened out. Daughter houses have been founded, the first on the island of Barbados to serve Guyana, the West Indies and, soon, I hope, the Latin American mainland; a second, seventeen miles outside Salisbury, Rhodesia, to cover that country and, later, when politics permit, English-speaking Central and Southern Africa as a whole. Successful residential courses have already been held at Canefield House, Barbados. In Rhodesia, lack of funds and shortage of staff have confined courses to a week-end basis. As such, they have succeeded. Nine hundred young African men and women from the Salisbury townships passed through Silveira House in its first eighteen months. They take away with them at least a sense of their dignity, the faintest flicker of hope. Very soon, I hope, the temporary arrangements at Silveira will cease and residential courses will start. The need for quality in Rhodesia is greater perhaps than anywhere else in Africa just now. Much is at stake.

This thumb-nail sketch of seven years' effort at building an elite is necessarily inadequate. It has meant a lot of work. It should have begun sooner, but there was no money. And gone faster; but there were not enough of us and the money was (and is) still short. At the moment, there's need at one and the same time for financial consolidation at the centre and further expansion abroad. The road will be rough, but worth travelling. I remain more than ever convinced that the work is vital. It represents something—I would say with honesty — that is rather rare in the Church; a strategic approach to a pressing problem on whose solution the future of the developing countries largely depends. If this is the case, the reader may well ask why so few are engaged in its solution. I cannot answer him here. All I can say is that the thought of so few in face of so much, keeps me awake at night.

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# Book Review

## DECENCY IS NOT ENOUGH

**Sans Everything** by Barbara Robb for AEGIS; Nelson,  
16s.

**F**IVE years ago in Uganda, I paid a short visit to the Karamojong. I still remember the passage into their territory. It was like entering another world. It was not merely that the physical characteristics of the countryside were different, dried-out thorn and scrub replacing the lush vegetation to south and west. The people themselves changed. One was suddenly amongst primitives, all in the space, so to say, of a few yards. It was an extraordinary sensation.

I had gone to spend a day or so with a very great missionary whose enthusiasm and drive had already thrust more than a glimmer of light into the paganism of these people. But the old habits remained and predominated. The Karamojong still fought their neighbours, Turkana and Suk, for cattle and, often, for fun. When these were not available, they fought each other, clan against clan. The week prior to my arrival in Karamoja, there had been nine such fights, with opposing warriors speared to death and wounded.

It was because of the constant fighting and feuding, no doubt, that their villages were made like miniature armed camps; each one a cluster of little round wattle huts with a boma of thorn built round it. Entrance was through a hole in the thorn through which one crawled precariously on hands and knees. I remember making the prickly passage on all fours in blistering heat to find myself in an enclave of miniature wattle huts. In one of them I met Florence, an old lady and a baptised Christian, soon, no doubt, to die. Florence was busy, almost over busy, I thought, preparing food. Even when talking to us she seemed preoccupied, intent on her job. The reason dawned on me later. I learnt it was the custom of the Karamojong, when they had no more use for their old people, to put them out in the bush to die. There the hyenas made short work of them.

I thought of Florence in between reading recently a book that

can claim to have worried the Minister of Health to the point of inquiring into conditions prevailing in certain of this country's old people's homes. It is called *Sans Everything* and the case it contains has been presented by Mrs. Barbara Robb on behalf of an association called Aid for the Elderly in Government Institutions, AEGIS for short. The case is grim and, as I examined it, I wondered quite sincerely whether Florence was not better off, left to the hyenas, than England's aged poor, left to the casual beastliness of some — let us hope the most minute minority — of those supposed to look after them. I rather think Florence and her like are in the more favoured position. To put things at their lowest, the last agony of the old in Karamoja spans no more than the space of a few moments taken out of a night, whereas some of their English counterparts appear to go through months and years of Hell on earth. But it was not of this, really, that I was thinking. What struck me most forcibly as I reflected on Mrs. Robb's dreadful pages was that the treatment meted out to old people in England and in Karamoja was in each case, differently motivated and that the difference was of great significance, not only in its effect on patients, but as an indication of the mental outlook of those who treated them.

In Karamoja, Florence and her like are discarded in their old age, but they are not spurned. The tribesmen who by this time may have put Florence out to die, did not despise her. They knew, as she knew that, when no longer able to work, her time would be thought to have come. Her value during life, like every other member of her clan, was in terms of her ability to serve its purpose. She was not valued in herself, but as one whose time was done; in anticipation, so to say, of natural death. No reason could be found why she should go on living. It was thought best, in consequence, that she should die. The philosophy is pagan and the practice barbaric, but it is, at least, understandable. Other people, caught in the darkness of paganism, have indulged in similar practices. They have not acted in defiance of accepted values, but in accordance with those they thought to be right. This, I think, is the point. In putting out their old to die, the Karamojong do what they think to be right. The English nurses alleged to treat so badly the old in some state institutions, do what they know to be wrong. There is a world of difference between the two, and the major blame is not on the side of the Karamojong.

The old people in the handful of institutions investigated by Mrs. Robb and her friends were on the receiving end of real contempt; of action, not in accordance with wrong values, but in defiance of accepted ones. The senior doctor in this country, who wrote across the case-notes of a seventy-five-year-old patient "Ready for the scrap heap" is in far worse moral shape than Karamojong clansmen who put out their old to die. There is no question in his case of sincere but unbalanced concern — for the clan at the price of the individual — prompted by a false pagan philosophy and taking issue in barbarous custom. There is no concern, in the case of the English doctor, for anyone but himself; simply selfishness towards others that treats befuddled senility with particular contempt. There is no question in this comparison of opposed codes of values. The Karamojong have a code which, through paganism, is wrongly graded. The English doctors and nurses on whom Mrs. Robb reports have no code: all they have is themselves. There is all the difference in the world between the pagan possessed of false gods and the post-Christian whose only god is himself. The former is fumbling for the light. The latter has rejected it along with anything that does not suit himself. It is this that defines his attitude to others, which I classify as contempt. It stares back at you rather horribly through the pages of Mrs. Robb's book.

We are, of course, all too prone to take the easy way out; in the direction of ourselves, that is, rather than in that dictated by regard for others. Christianity brought this regard, with the immensity of the emphasis placed by its Founder on the dignity of every man and the compassion that flowed out from Him, during his brief span on earth, on the very least of his brethren. In his footsteps thousands have followed, emptying themselves out for his sake in the service of others, whilst millions more, though not reaching this pitch, have had added regard for those about them because of his sake. Even so, the menace is always there that, despite Christian injunction and the power of Grace, men will take advantage of others; a thing they are more likely to do now that, for so many, Christian values are of decreasing account. There is the more need for caution, therefore, on the part of sane government that those charged with the care of society's less fortunate members should be subject to adequate supervision.

This is as near guaranteed as can be in the case of religious



orders of nursing nuns, for the measure of care they extend to their patients is quantified and given direction by Christ-like love and that, indeed, should know no bounds. It is, for me, slightly ridiculous that government should expect an a-religious nursing staff in a state institution to provide helpless old people with the kind and loving care that can only come from supernatural inspiration. It is, at the same time, typical of an English government that it should expect this and give way to shocked surprise if the expected does not happen. In their naïvete, the English still tend to believe that, like Christ-inspired love, what they think of as "natural decency" will know no bounds. They still do not realise how wrong they are. If they did, they would press the Minister, in the light of Mrs. Robb's report, to consign the care of England's elderly to nursing orders of nuns.

But the Minister should look deeper than this. Anglo-Saxon materialism tends to make of the old a race apart, to think of them as needing to be "tidied up" into institutions. This is, of course, not so in what the English still call with condescending arrogance the "Latin countries" of Europe. There the impress of Christianity remains far stronger than in this island and it shows itself, amongst other things, in a concern for the old that keeps them within the centre of the family during their declining years. In Spain, France and Italy, grandparents, thank God, are still given an honoured place within the family circle and cared for with love and devotion until the end of their lives. It is only in the countries dominated by the post-Christian remains of the declining Anglo-Saxon Protestant ethic that the old are tidied up and put away in state institutions where they are unlikely to be a bother to their materialistically-minded and selfish children. I am quite sure that a very large number of the old people in state institutions in England today are only there because they are not wanted at home. None know this better than the old people themselves; and it is this knowledge that enfeebles them and drives them into senility long before their time. So many of them die starved of the one thing they need above all else in their declining years—the affectionate concern flowing over those who share the full round of family life.

In the last analysis, therefore, the old today, like so many others, are victims of the heartlessness, which always follows forgetfulness of God. Duty is a dirty word in England nowadays. Disregard

for it has led the younger members of society to push their old parents into institutions to get them out of their way. We should not be surprised if staff in charge of these institutions mete out to their patients equally selfish treatment: they, too, wish to get their patients out of the way; which means that they neglect them. There is something here which is cumulative and frightening; something that can have no end until men, once again, begin examining their consciences. They will learn, if they do so, that decency is not enough.

Paul Crane, S.J.

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## Not A Vain Dream

“And surely it is not a vain dream that man shall come to find his joys only in acts of enlightenment and of mercy, and not in cruel pleasures, as he doth now, in gluttony, lust, pride, boasting and envious self-exaltation. I hold firmly that this is no dream but that the time is at hand . . . I believe that through Christ we shall accomplish this great work . . . and all men will say ‘The stone which the builders rejected is become the chief stone of the corner. And of the mockers themselves we may ask, If this faith of ours be a dream, then how long is it to wait ere ye shall have finished your edifice, and have ordered everything justly by the intellect alone without Christ? . . . In truth they have a greater faculty for dreaming than we have. They think to order all wisely; but, having rejected Christ, they will end by drenching the world with blood. For blood crieth again for blood, and they that take the sword shall perish by the sword.’” — From Father Zossima’s discourse in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky.